



Israeli troops wound 18 in Gaza

OCCUPIED GAZA (R) Israeli soldiers shot and wounded an eight-year-old boy and 17 other people at demonstrations in the occupied Gaza Strip Friday, Palestinians and police said. Medics at a United Nations clinic said the boy was hit in the head in protests in Jabalya triggered by the death of a Palestinian in Shifa Hospital. Hospital records gave the cause of death of Ali Al Sharaif, 25, as teargas inhalation. Palestinians said the gas was fired by Israeli troops a week ago. An Israeli military source confirmed Sharaif's death but said he was wounded in clashes with the army last week. An off-duty Israeli soldier shot and critically wounded a Palestinian who allegedly stoned his car in Arab East Jerusalem Friday, police said. Police detained the soldier for questioning. Palestinians said Israeli soldiers used rockets to blow up at least two houses in Gaza City where they suspected activists were hiding. The army confirmed six Palestinians arrived at hospital with injuries and said it was checking the other reports.

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King, Assad exchange views

AMMAN (Petra) — His Majesty King Hussein Friday evening consulted with Syrian President Hafez Assad on the current Arab situation. During the telephone conversation, both leaders reviewed the best means to consolidate the Arab stand against challenges being faced at present.

Sayeh urges Clinton to be even-handed

AMMAN (Petra) — Palestine National Council (PNC) Speaker Abdul Hamid Al Sayeh Friday called on the new American administration of Bill Clinton to follow a new even-handed policy in the Middle East. Sheikh Sayeh also urged Washington to implement United Nations resolutions fairly on all parties concerned without giving any preferential treatment to Israel at the expense of Arab rights. In a statement to Petra, Sheikh Sayeh said: "We do not want the new U.S. president to be hostile to Israel, but we want him to be fair in dealing with global issues and to give priority to the Palestine question." Sheikh Sayeh said the Arabs "are looking with hope to President Clinton and expect him to apply justice to the Middle East and implement the U.N. resolutions against Israel with the same resolve and determination, demonstrated against others, so that peace, stability and justice will prevail in the region."

Suspect acquitted of AUB bombing

BEIRUT (AP) — A Beirut military court Friday acquitted a Shiite Muslim accused of bombing the American University of Beirut (AUB) 14 months ago. The five-man tribunal cited "insufficient evidence" in the case against Jihad Khalil, 29, who was arrested a week after the Nov. 8, 1991 bombing. One person was killed and eight wounded in the car bomb explosion that tore down the administration building and the clock tower of the Middle East's most prestigious university. The court also dismissed a charge against Khalil that he murdered his sister, Hayat, 25, a former AUB student, after the bombing.

Indian plane seized in brief hijack

LUCKNOW, India (R) — A man reported to be seeking the release of imprisoned Hindu nationalists hijacked an Indian Airlines plane Friday but surrendered shortly afterwards, officials said. Airline officials said the plane was seized after leaving Lucknow, in northern India, for New Delhi carrying 48 passengers. They said the man claimed to be carrying a bomb and threatened to blow up the aircraft. The plane returned to Lucknow 35 minutes after takeoff and the hijacker, identified as Satish Chandra Pandey, surrendered. The Press Trust of India (PTI) news agency said Pandey had surrendered after speaking to Atal Behari Vajpayee, a leader of the Hindu Nationalist Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP).

Famous Japanese novelist dies

TOKYO (AP) — Kobo Abe, one of Japan's most prominent authors and a major influence on post-war Japanese literature, died Friday at a Tokyo hospital, the hospital said. He was 68. The hospital did not disclose his cause of death, but Kyodo News Service said he had entered the hospital Wednesday after suffering a cerebral hemorrhage. A novelist and playwright, Mr. Abe was best known for his portrayal of modern man's struggle against alienation and loss of identity in his 1962 novel "Woman in the Dunes." His works often focused on the relationship between the hunter and the hunted and on the bleakness of modern urban life.

Turk planes attack rebels in east

ANKARA (R) — Turkish jets and helicopter gunships attacked separatist Kurdish guerrilla bases in eastern Turkey for the second successive day Friday, a security official said. "The operation is continuing today. But no clear result (on rebel casualties) has been received. We must wait for the operation to end," an official from the emergency rule government in Diyarbakir city told Reuters by telephone.

Confusion prevails in Iraqi-declared truce

Baghdad denies violating ceasefire and U.S. report of attack, maintains conciliatory tone; more U.N. inspectors arrive

Combined agency dispatches

CONFUSION surrounded the status of an Iraqi-declared ceasefire in its confrontation with the American-led coalition forces Friday, with the U.S. saying its forces had fired missiles at Iraqi radar installations and Baghdad refuting the report. A second team of United Nations weapons inspectors arrived in Baghdad, one day after the first U.N. flight in one month landed in the Iraqi capital after receiving clearance from the Baghdad authorities. The U.S. report on the missile incident said Iraqi surface-to-air missile radar had tried to track a U.S. F-4G fighter and an F-16 flying over the northern "no-fly" zone near the city of Mosul. The F-4G fired two missiles, U.S. officials said. It was the second such incident in two days following the ceasefire declaration by the Iraqi government late Tuesday in a show of "goodwill" to the new adminis-

tration of President Bill Clinton. But Iraq said it had no missile batteries in the area where the United States said Friday's attack took place. "There is no SAM-3 or any other type of anti-aircraft battery east of Mosul," a foreign ministry spokesman said. "We think that today's incident is a fabricated one which was aimed at provocation," he added. At first Reuters erroneously interpreted the spokesman as meaning that U.S. planes did not attack Friday. The United States said its planes attacked an anti-aircraft missile site about 24 kilometres east of the city of Mosul and 30 kilometres north of the 36th Parallel. The parallel is the southern limit of the "no-fly" zone which the United States and its allies have imposed in the north. "The first Harm missile apparently failed to neutralise the radar and the second missile was fired after continued radar track-

ing," said a statement from the U.S. European command, based in Stuttgart. "The Iraqi action was a clear threat to the coalition task force aircraft," it added, confirming earlier reports from Defence Department officials in Washington. The command said no assessment of damage to the Iraqi site was available. "First indications are that the missiles apparently missed the target," a U.S. Defence Department official said, speaking on condition of anonymity. "We don't know why that happened," he said. The source said the Harm missile is supposed to follow the radar signal into the target. The official said that one possible reason for the miss was that the radar signal coming from the Iraqi installation was not strong enough. The White House said, President Clinton would not soften his hard-line stance towards Iraq, and U.S. military jets will con-

tinued to respond to any threat against them from Iraqi air defences. "The president is prepared to hold firm with Iraq. They must comply with all the U.N. resolutions," Clinton spokesman George Stephanopoulos said. "As you know, similar to the situation yesterday, if the Iraqis take hostile action against the American pilots they will respond," Mr. Stephanopoulos said at a regular White House briefing. Iraqi Foreign Minister Mohammad Saeed Al Sahhaf, meanwhile, summoned foreign ambassadors Friday and told them that Iraq had not provoked Thursday's attack and had not violated the ceasefire. Mr. Sahhaf described Thursday's incident as "an irresponsible action on the part of the American side." "It clearly seems that some forces harbouring bad intentions

(Continued on page 5)



Palestinian expellees stranded in South Lebanon stage a march Friday towards Lebanese army lines to present petitions to the world community to force the Israeli occupation authorities to allow their return home (AFP photo)

Beirut allows British airlift of evictees

MARJ AL ZOHOOR, Lebanon (Agencies) — Lebanon Friday agreed to a British offer to airlift back to Israeli-occupied territories Palestinian evictees who have fallen ill or who Israel says were mistakenly expelled, government sources said. Meanwhile, the 413 Palestinians, stranded at a tent camp in icy South Lebanon with little food and medicine, marched towards Lebanese lines to show support for Beirut's decision not to take them in or send them supplies. Israel expelled the Palestinians on Dec. 17 alleging they were Islamic fundamentalist activists but Lebanon refused to accept them.

"Lebanon has agreed to let British helicopters fly to the deportees' camp and take the sick and nine wrongly expelled as long as they don't take aid in and don't fly over our liberated land," a government source told Reuters in Beirut.

British Foreign Secretary Douglas Hurd said Thursday the helicopters could be used to return evictees who have fallen ill or those Israel says were expelled by mistake as long as aid workers were allowed to visit the group as a whole. The Lebanese sources said the helicopters, based in Cyprus, should land in Israel and fly to the camp over the Jewish state's self-styled "security zone" in South Lebanon.

A spokesman for Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin said Mr. Hurd's statement did not involve Israel. "I don't think we can expect a request from the British. They

Israel hopes it has stalled U.N. sanctions

TEL AVIV (R) — Israel said Friday it hoped to delay any U.N. Security Council action against its expulsion of more than 400 Palestinians to Lebanon until after its high court rules on the legality of the move. Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin's spokesman said if the court ordered the expellees be allowed to return, the government would comply. "What I can say is Israel is interested and would refer that the Security Council would not convene before the decision of the high court," Gad Ben-Ari said. "The prime minister said already whatever the court decides of course binds the government...if there would be an order of the court to get them back, we'll get them back," he said. "It all depends on the decision and its wording." Mr. Ben-Ari declined to confirm a report in Israel's Haaretz daily newspaper that the government had asked the United States to delay the council convening. The high court allowed the expulsions of the alleged Islamic fundamentalist activists on Dec. 17. It said it would rule later on the legality of not allowing appeals, as customary, before the banishment. No decision is expected before Monday. The evictees have been trapped in South Lebanon for five weeks. Lebanon refuses to accept them, saying it will not be a dumping ground for Israel (see separate story). A third mission to Israel by a U.N. envoy since the Security Council condemned the expulsions and demanded it be reversed on Thursday failed to budge Israel. Envoy Chinmay Gharekhan said the council had run out of patience. Arab states, saying there is a double standard in the treatment of Israel and Iraq, have demanded unprecedented U.N. sanctions against Israel.

Egypt seen angry over Sudan's approach to U.N.

CAIRO (R) — Egypt has resumed media attacks on Sudan and is asserting practical control over a disputed border area because Sudan took the row to the United Nations, Western diplomats said Friday. Cairo's semi-official Al-Ahram newspaper devoted a scathing front-page editorial to Khartoum's "useless" rulers and Al Gomhouria announced a team of Egyptian doctors would visit the Halaib triangle Monday to give out free drugs. The two countries, also at loggerheads over Sudan's Islamic government, have disputed the remote stretch of desert for over a year but diplomats said Sudan escalated the row by complaining to the U.N. last month that Egypt had used force. "As a diplomatic move, it has really backfired... Egypt sees it as severe provocation to take it outside the Arab family," one Cairo-based diplomat said. Egypt, in an angry letter of its own to the U.N. Security Council, rejected Sudan's charges that Egyptian troops crossed into Sudan in early December. Both sides have sought to involve diplomatic allies in the fray in the last few days.

A senior Syrian diplomat visited Khartoum last week in what Egyptian diplomats said was an attempt to persuade Sudan to attend a bilateral meeting on the issue in Cairo. Iran implicitly backed Sudan during a visit by Sudanese Foreign Minister Ali Salhoul to Tehran on Friday, saying Sudan's territorial integrity must be maintained. A committee of the two neighbours, which met twice on the issue last year, had been due to meet earlier this month but Sudanese diplomats said Khartoum was not interested in discussing the problem bilaterally after Egypt had taken over the area on the ground. Last week Khartoum decided to nationalise about 20 elite schools in Sudan run by Cairo for decades, with over 10,000 pupils. Sudan said it was surprised by Egyptian protests over the decision, which was not anti-Egyptian but part of a wider education policy. "After all this cooperation, every Egyptian and Sudanese must ask what (Sudanese Head of State Omar Hassan) Al Bashir's government is trying to do to relations," Al-Ahram editor Ibrahim Nafie said, listing Egypt's help to Sudan in the past. "But whatever the useless do, their attempts, to divide the two peoples will not succeed," he added.

King receives Juan Carlos' message

AQABA (Petra) — His Majesty King Hussein Friday received a written message from King Juan Carlos of Spain. The message was delivered to King Hussein by Spanish Foreign Minister Javier Solana, who was received here by King Hussein. The King and Mr. Solana reviewed bilateral relations and the Middle East peace process. King Hussein stressed Jordan's firm position and its commitment to establishing a just, comprehensive and honourable peace in the region. King Hussein and Mr. Solana also discussed crisis sparked by Israel's Dec. 17 expulsion of over 400 Palestinians and both stressed the need to solve it in accordance with U.N. Security



His Majesty King Hussein Friday receives Spanish Foreign Minister Javier Solana at Aqaba (Petra photo)

Council Resolution 799. The audience was attended by Foreign Minister Kamel Abu Jaber, the Jordanian ambassador to Spain and the Spanish ambassador to Jordan as well as members of the delegation accompanying Mr. Solana. "I am very pleased with the conversation I had with His Majesty King Hussein," the

Israel rejects Arafat appeal, says no dealings with PLO

TEL AVIV (Agencies) — A statement from Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin's office said Friday Israel still would boycott talks with the Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) and refuse it a direct role in Middle East peace negotiations. The statement quoted by the Itim news agency was in response to a dramatic appeal by PLO Chairman Yasser Arafat on Israel Television Thursday night for Israelis and Palestinians "to forge a brave peace." "The prime minister's position remains the same, by which the negotiations will be conducted only with the Palestinian peace talks delegation, and the PLO in Tunis is not a party to the negotiations," the statement said. Mr. Arafat was interviewed by telephone from the PLO head-

quarters in Tunis, appearing with Israeli peace crusader Abie Nathan who flew to meet Mr. Arafat the day after the Israeli parliament abolished a law banning contacts with the PLO. Mr. Nathan, also interviewed on the television, said Mr. Arafat wanted to meet with Mr. Rabin "anywhere in the world." The parliament's repeal Tuesday of a 1986 "anti-terror" amendment meant Israelis could no longer be prosecuted or jailed up to three years for meetings with the PLO. Mr. Nathan was imprisoned twice under the law. On the surface, the parliament decision opened the door to contacts between Israel and its arch Middle East rival. But the statement from Mr. Rabin's office made clear his government would maintain its

diplomatic boycott of the PLO. But the boycott has not denied the PLO an indirect role in peace talks. Since October-1992, Israel has been negotiating in U.S.-backed peace talks with Palestinians from the occupied territories who say they represent the PLO. "I call once again on the prime minister, Mr. Rabin, and his government to agree to a meeting of the courageous, in order to establish a courageous peace," Mr. Arafat said on Israel Television Thursday. Mr. Nathan phoned Israel Television and handed the receiver to Mr. Arafat. The PLO leader's taped statement was aired on a weekly news programme.

(Continued on page 3)

Rabin says he wants peace in Arab TV interview

TEL AVIV (AP) — Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin has appealed for peace in his first television interview for direct broadcast to the Arab World. "I feel that too much wrong has been done in the past. The time has arrived to find a solution to this conflict," Mr. Rabin said in the one-half hour interview. Mr. Rabin's spokesman Gad Ben-Ari said Friday the interview was the first prime minister granted to an Arab television network, the London-based Middle East Television. He also said Rabin had given interviews to London-based Arabic newspapers.

"We are attempting to reach out to a wide Arab population to explain the Israeli position in a direct way. I think we managed to break another small taboo," Mr. Ben-Ari told the Associated Press.

The interview was broadcast Thursday in Arab countries, and the AP was shown a tape Friday. It was conducted in English by the network's Jerusalem bureau chief, Maher Shalabi, and John Sweeney, a London editor, and shown with Arab subtitles.

The interview was broadcast the same night as a rare Israel Television interview with Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) Chairman Yasser Arafat, but Mr. Rabin's office said Friday Israel would still refuse to include the PLO in peace talks. In the interview recorded Jan. 17, Mr. Rabin sought to differentiate between his government and that of former Prime Minister Yitzhak Shamir, whose Likud bloc was defeated by Labour

Clinton averts early clash with Senate

WASHINGTON (Agencies) — Getting a fast baptism in the rigours of Washington politics, President Bill Clinton Friday backed away from an early showdown with Congress by quickly accepting the withdrawal of Zoe Baird as his nominee for attorney general. Mr. Clinton, inaugurated Wednesday as the 42nd U.S. president, suffered an embarrassing setback when Democratic political support for Mr. Baird crumbled over her hiring of illegal aliens as household help (see page 8).

As the new White House team tried to settle in after five days of inaugural celebrations, Mr. Clinton's wife, Hillary, appeared to be emerging as a major power broker. New White House Press Secretary Dee Dee Myers told reporters Mrs. Clinton would have an office in the West Wing, where most White House policy work is done, and would focus on domestic policy, including health care.

The blow over the withdrawal of Ms. Baird's nomination was softened for Mr. Clinton by the swift confirmation of 18 other nominees for cabinet posts and other top-tier jobs.

In a White House ceremony Friday that Mr. Clinton attended, Supreme Court Chief Justice William Rehnquist formally swore in 16 cabinet officers and senior officials. "I'm deeply gratified to the United States Senate for their quick confirmation of 18 nominees only two days after the inauguration," Mr. Clinton said at the ceremony. "The Senate acted with historic dispatch because it recognises that our nation needs action now on our problems." The nominations made by Mr. Clinton included:

Warren Christopher, of California, to be secretary of state; (sworn in Thursday); Lloyd Bentsen to be secretary of the treasury; Les Aspin to be secretary of defence; Bruce Babbitt to be secretary of the interior; Mike Espy, of Mississippi, to be secretary of agriculture; Ronald H. Brown to be secretary of commerce; Robert B. Reich to be secretary of labour; Donna E. Shalala to be secretary of health and human services; Henry G. Cisneros to be secretary of housing and urban development; Federico Pena to be secretary of transportation; Hazel Rollins O'Leary to be secretary of energy; Richard W. Riley to be secretary of education; Jesse Brown to be secretary of veterans affairs; Madeleine K. Albright to be the representative of the United States of America to the United Nations; Carol M. Browner to be administrator of the Environmental Protection Agency; Michael Kantor to be United States trade representative; and Leon E. Panetta to be director of the Office of Management and Budget.

Under the ethics rules spelled out in Mr. Clinton's first executive order, the senior officials of his administration are prohibited from lobbying the departments or agencies they head for five years after they leave office. They also have a lifetime ban on representing foreign governments. Friday, Mr. Clinton planned to act on executive orders expanding abortion rights. The date was the 20th anniversary of the supreme court ruling that legalised abortion. One order ready for his signature was to lift restrictions on abortion counselling at federally financed clinics. Another would end the ban on medical research using fetal tissue from abortion

Bush aide says U.S. backed coup attempts in Baghdad

WASHINGTON (R) — George Bush has urged governments around the world to support efforts to oust Saddam Hussein, and the former president's top security aide admitted Washington had backed coup attempts against the Iraqi leader.

In a five-page report to Congress released hours before Bill Clinton took over the White House, Mr. Bush said President Saddam continues to defy terms of the 1991 Gulf war ceasefire.

He urged world leaders to support opposition groups trying to topple the Iraqi leader — whose challenges to Mr. Bush led to allied air strikes against Iraq in the final days of the president's term.

"We continue to support the efforts of the Iraq National Congress to develop a broad-based alternative to the Saddam regime," said Mr. Bush.

"We encourage other governments to do the same," said Mr. Bush. "The Congress espouses a future Iraq based on the principles of political pluralism, territorial unity and full compliance with all the U.N. Security Council resolutions."

Mr. Clinton has supported Mr. Bush's tough stand against President Saddam and during an interview with CBS said "it is almost inconceivable that we can have good relations with Iraq with him there."

"He has given no indication that he is capable of being a reliable member of the community of nations," Mr. Clinton said of the Iraqi leader.

national security adviser, admitted in an interview published Wednesday that the administration had backed coup attempts against President Saddam and came "pretty close" to succeeding at one point.

Mr. Scowcroft told the Washington Post newspaper that Washington supported a plot to topple President Saddam last summer but that it was thwarted by "one of the most efficient security systems in the world" put together by President Saddam.

He said the Bush administration was careful not to violate a ban that prohibits U.S. leaders or their operatives from engaging in any act that would lead to the assassination of a foreign head of state.

He said, however, that Bush officials believed they could foster a new foreign government that did not violate the U.S. ban "if you do it the right way."

Mr. Scowcroft offered no details on the plot to overthrow President Saddam, but indicated that it involved members of Iraq's powerful military establishment.

He told the newspaper the United States was not directly involved in the coup attempt but made it clear to the backers that they would receive full American support if they were successful.

Schwarzkopf: Point made

Retired General Norman Schwarzkopf said Wednesday that recent U.S. air strikes against Iraq had "made the point" for now but cautioned that

President Saddam will remain a problem.

"He is going to keep doing what he has been doing, so we can't afford to pull out of Kuwait," said the leader of the allied assault that ousted Iraqi forces from the emirate in the 1991 Gulf war.

Gen. Schwarzkopf said the Iraqi president will continue to "provoke problems" along the border separating his country from others in the oil-rich Gulf.

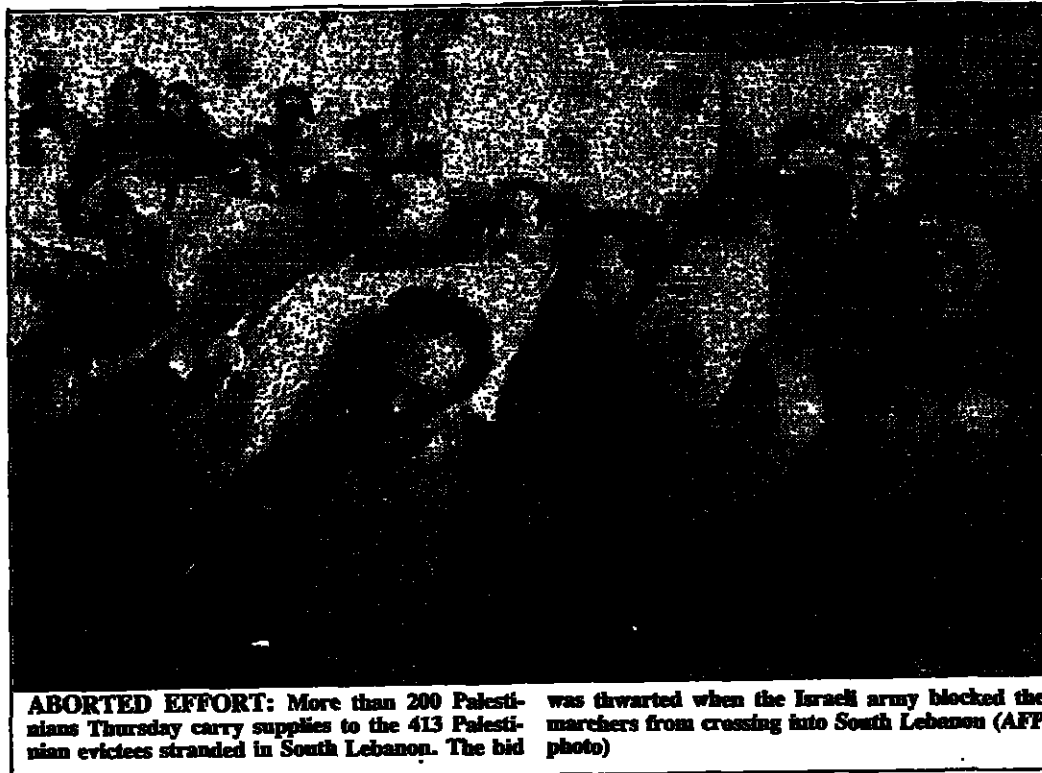
But asked about the recent air strikes, he said enough has been done.

"We have made the point. They (Iraqis) are complying with the resolutions of the United Nations, so we accomplished what we set out to do," said Gen. Schwarzkopf, adding this was his military assessment, not a political statement.

He made the comments during an interview preceding a fundraising luncheon for the Boys and Girls Club of Palm Beach County.

Gen. Schwarzkopf said it was unfortunate one of the U.S. missiles fired at Iraqi military targets Sunday was knocked off course by anti-aircraft fire and struck near a Baghdad hotel where three people were killed.

"It was an accident. The terrible thing about war is that people get killed," said Gen. Schwarzkopf, who described himself as "one of those guys who would much rather have peace than war. We should do all we can (diplomatically) before we get involved in one."



ABORTED EFFORT: More than 200 Palestinians Thursday carry supplies to the 413 Palestinian evacuees stranded in South Lebanon. The bid was thwarted when the Israeli army blocked the marchers from crossing into South Lebanon (AFP photo)

AIDS-like disease kills 60,000 in Sudan

NAIROBI (R) — An AIDS-like wasting disease has killed 60,000 people in an area of southern Sudan cut off by civil war from outside medical help, U.N. and relief sources said Friday.

"They call it the killing disease. Whole families, villages have been wiped out and we've seen this with our own eyes," said a medical relief agency worker.

The disease, Kala-azar or visceral leishmaniasis, is spread by parasite-infected sandflies that live in acacia forests along flooded rivers. Symptoms include weight loss and fever.

"The symptoms are like AIDS. Your immune system breaks down and you die of other infections," the medical worker said. Kala-azar has been diagnosed in different parts of the world from southern France to India,

but the worst epidemics have probably broken out in Africa, medical officials said.

Relief officials estimate in 1993, 85,000 people lived in Parang, a remote area on the Bahr Al Ghazal Nile River tributary 830 kilometres southwest of the capital Khartoum.

Last week a U.N. relief team visited Parang, which is usually inaccessible due to fighting between rebel factions and government militias. After interviewing residents they estimated 60,000 had died of the disease.

"Kala-azar is definitely to blame. People were in a very bad state. They said they didn't know if they were still going to be alive next month," said Rob Hadley, a Nairobi-based official of the United Nations Children's Fund

(UNICEF).

"We're looking at about 60,000 people dead," said Mr. Hadley, adding that until 1989 the population was believed to have been stable.

Mr. Hadley said the dinka and Nuer tribesmen of Parang had been unable to escape from the area because they were hemmed in by a battlefield between rebels and government force to the north and the Sud, the world's largest swamp, to the south.

To escape raids by rival tribesmen or militias — who are still reported to capture people from the area to sell them into slavery — the people of Parang often sleep in the forest where they are infected by sandflies, relief officials said.

Clinton backs force to compel Iraq's compliance with U.N. resolutions

WASHINGTON (USIA) — President Bill Clinton Thursday backed the use of force to compel Iraq's compliance with United Nations resolutions.

Questioned about the attack on an Iraqi air defence installation in the northern "no-fly" zone, Mr. Clinton said he did not want to comment, except to say that he intended to follow his predecessor's policy of backing the United Nations.

"We're going to adhere to our policy," Mr. Clinton told reporters during a photo session with his senior White House staff.

"We're going to stay with our policy. It's the American policy."

Two U.S. aircraft, while escorting a French reconnaissance plane 13 kilometres southwest of Mosul, attacked the anti-aircraft site after the battery's radar locked onto the French aircraft. A U.S. F-4G fired a Harm missile, which homes in on radar signals, and a second U.S. plane, an F-16 fighter-bomber, dropped two cluster bombs on the site. The extent of damage was not immediately known. Pilots consider it a hostile act if radar "paints" their aircraft with its beam, or locks-on to the plane. "Painting" and "locking-on" are preliminary steps to firing anti-aircraft missiles.

In his inaugural address, Mr. Clinton promised the United States "would not shrink from challenges" abroad during his tenure. "When our vital interests are challenged," he said, "or the will and conscience of the international community is defied, we will act — with peaceful diplomacy whenever possible, with force when necessary."

Clinton spokesman George Stephanopoulos said that the attack "was consistent with previous practice, and President Clinton supports it."

Mr. Stephanopoulos, Mr. Clinton's director of communications, avoided characterising Iraq's motives in turning on the radar set, but he added, "We continue to hold the position that they must



Iraq's ambassador to the U.N. Nizar Hamdani Wednesday watches a live broadcast of U.S. President Bill Clinton's inauguration (AFP photo)

comply with all U.N. resolutions." Mr. Stephanopoulos said Mr. Clinton had approved "past practices" in reacting to Iraq's activity, rather than approving specific acts; "We expect to continue that," he added.

The U.S. position, he said, is the same as stated "many, many times: We expect full compliance with U.N. Security Council resolutions. As far as the military situation goes, we will continue the past practices."

Asked if the Russian demand that the United States seek specific Security Council approval for military action compromises the international consensus on Iraq, Mr. Stephanopoulos replied, "We think the coalition is strong."

He said the president is "encouraged" that U.N. monitors had been able "to return to Iraq and to continue their work" of discovering and dismantling Baghdad's weapons of mass destruction.

At the State Department, spokesman Richard Boucher told reporters that President Clinton and Secretary of State Warren Christopher have both made

clear "their full determination to see that Iraq complies with U.N. resolutions" and that U.S. pilots, when threatened by Iraq over the no-fly zones, "will respond as necessary."

Mr. Christopher told reporters earlier in the day that "the United States intends to protect our pilots in the no-fly zone."

"The Iraqis know perfectly well what it takes to comply with U.N. resolutions and the establishment of the no-fly zones," he said before a meeting with African National Congress leader Nelson Mandela.

"I think what happened today (Thursday) is a reflection of the determination that the Clinton administration will have in that area," he added. When Iraqi radar "illuminates our pilots, we are going to protect our pilots."

Mr. Boucher emphasised that the United States consulted with France before launching the January 17 cruise missile attack against an Iraqi nuclear fabrication plant. The attack was in response to continued Iraqi violations of the U.N. resolutions on the no-fly zones.

Ghali appeals for \$138m Afghan aid

NEW YORK (USIA) — U.N. Secretary General Boutros Ghali has issued an urgent appeal for \$138.1 million to meet emergency humanitarian needs in Afghanistan.

"The severe hardships faced by large sections of the Afghan population in an environment devastated by 14 years of war must be of priority concern to the international community," Dr. Ghali said Thursday.

The secretary general said that during 1992, despite adverse conditions, over 1.5 million refugees returned to Afghanistan and up to two million are expected to follow in 1993. He said they must deal with harsh winter weather, a collapsed infrastructure, the threat of numerous land mines, and a lack of adequate food, shelter and health facilities.

The appeal covers the needs of the most vulnerable sections of the population from January to September 1993 and focuses on what the United Nations calls "life-sustaining" actions that include mine clearance; providing food, water, medicines, seeds, fertilizer and insecticides; and repairing sanitation facilities and agricultural irrigation systems.

A U.N. spokesman said that the secretary-general was placing special emphasis on Afghanistan's needs, because the U.N.'s humanitarian aid efforts are in "real peril."

The U.N.'s 1992 appeal for Afghanistan raised only \$85 million of the \$180 million needed.

Under-secretary General Jan Eliasson said that "the humanitarian assistance provided by the United Nations will remain essential in 1993."

Iraq insists cruise-hit plant was industrial

By Michael Jansen

IRAQ'S MINISTER of Industry Amir Al Saadeh said the Al-Nida machine tool factory which was reduced to rubble by Sunday's U.S. cruise missile attack on Baghdad was "struck by 40 missiles," the original U.S. claim was "37," later revised downward to 27. The minister, a chemical engineer who took his BSc and PhD degrees at the University of Surrey, is responsible for the plant.

The factory, located in the Zafraniyah quarter, was not a "nuclear installation" as claimed by the U.S., but a plant for manufacturing "precision machine tools," Dr. Saadeh, the only member of the government who is not a member of the ruling Baath Party, told this correspondent.

"It was a general purpose plant housing very sophisticated equipment" to manufacture "components for electrical generators, the petrol chemical industry and other uses," he said.

Of course, it was a dual-purpose plant with both military and civilian production potential, he said. "Since the end of the Iran war its production had been for the civilian sector. It had been inspected on five occasions by U.N. inspectors, the latest visit being in November 1992. The inspection team knew every single machine, every single item in the plant."

The U.S.-led coalition missed the Zafraniyah plant in 1991 because it "had no foreign participation" in its construction and operations. Plants which did were destroyed or damaged in coalition raids, he said. "That should be a lesson for the Third World."

The Zafraniyah plant provided many of the components for the reconstruction of the "baby milk plant" bombed by the coalition in

1991. The baby milk plant's rebuilding was completed last week and it was reopened Thursday.

"The plant (at Zafraniyah) was in production until Jan. 17," the minister asserted. "I am very worried about the fate of a large pump for a fertiliser plant which was taken there also Jan. 17 for repair. I hope to find the pump beneath the rubble. Its loss will reduce our fertiliser production capacity. The destruction of this facility will not stop us but it will hinder us in our drive to meet our agricultural requirements."

In 1991 Iraq launched a programme to become self-sufficient in foodstuffs, 70 per cent being imported before the coalition's war.

The remaining cruise missiles launched from U.S. ships in the Gulf and the Red Sea landed at four locations: The village of Tel Al Zalal near Mosul in the northern Nineveh province, the Karada and Hay Amil residential quarters in Baghdad and the lobby was gutted and windows shattered to the seventh floor in the multi-storey structure.

Two women — a reception clerk and a Jordanian guest — were killed at the hotel and a number of people injured.

Dr. Saadeh said that the Al Rashid Hotel had been a potential "target" of the coalition ever since 1991. "A big expensive target, the most famous hotel" in Iraq's capital city, "is a symbol to the people."

Sunday's cruise attack had taken "months of preparation," the minister stated. "The missile which struck the hotel had been programmed with its image... It took two hours for the missiles to travel from launch to target."

The writer has just returned from a week-long visit to Iraq.

World scholars decry Muslim fundamentalism

By Samia Hakhouli

CAIRO (R) — Scholars from moderate Islamic countries Thursday denounced Muslim fundamentalists seeking to topple their governments and replace them with purist Islamic states.

A declaration issued at the end of a three-day conference in Cairo said: "The conference denounces any deviation from the correct Islamic concepts... including violence and terrorism."

The declaration adopted by more than 35 religious ministers and 100 scholars from Arab, Asian and African Muslim countries urged Muslims to spread Islam through peaceful means rather than violence.

It called on Muslim countries to settle their disputes through negotiation rather than military action.

"The meeting urges scholars to provide more care to Muslim youth and consolidate their belief in Islamic values and principles to confront perverted trends of thoughts," it said.

The religious leaders began their meeting Tuesday to find Islamic methods to counter growing support for fundamentalism

among young people in their societies.

Many Arab countries like Egypt, Tunisia and Algeria are on the offensive against fundamentalists seeking to topple their governments and replace them with purist Islamic states.

The declaration urged Muslim countries to establish guidance institutions for their citizens "to purify the Islamic concepts from the distortions which took place and which are alien to Islam."

It asked them revise the laws implemented in their countries and make them conform with Islamic Sharia law.

The conference also denounced what it called the West's double standard in punishing Iraq for violations of United Nations resolutions while turning a blind eye when Serbia and Israel did the same.

"This makes us question and doubt the credibility and measure of the international legitimacy," it said.

It condemned Israel's expulsion of more than 400 Palestinians to Lebanon last month and demanded the world force the Jewish state to comply with U.N. Resolution 799 demanding their return.

MIDDLE EAST NEWS IN BRIEF

Iran criticises Russia for arming Serbs

NICOSIA (R) — Iran has publicly voiced concern about Russian military aid to Serbs in their fight against Muslims in Bosnia-Herzegovina for the first time. Supreme leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, meeting Georgia's leader Eduard Shevardnadze in Tehran, urged the former Soviet republic to help prevent Serb "crimes" against Bosnian Muslims. The Iranian news agency (IRNA) reported. "He (Khamenei) said the Islamic Republic (of Iran) was greatly concerned about Russia's military aid to the Serbs, which had injured the feelings of the Muslims in the region."

"Obviously, whoever helps the Serbs in their perpetration of these crimes shall be condemned in the history, and Georgia can play an influential role in preventing those crimes," it quoted Ayatollah Khamenei as saying. The agency, monitored in Cyprus, said Mr. Shevardnadze "deplored the developments in Bosnia-Herzegovina and said the U.N. Security Council was to blame."

Iran has maintained good relations with Moscow since the Soviet Union's breakup a year ago despite criticising aspects of Russian policy in Muslim-populated former Soviet republics. Last November Tehran took delivery of one of three diesel-powered Kilo-class submarines it bought from Russia. It said it paid \$450 million for the three vessels, denying Western reports that they cost \$600 million each.

Israel agrees to return Sinai antiquities

CAIRO (R) — Israel has agreed to hand back to Egypt over the next two years thousands of antiquities it uncovered during its occupation of the Sinai. An Egyptian antiquities official said Friday, Mohammed Ibrahim Bakr, head of the Egyptian Antiquities Organisation (EAO), told a news conference at Cairo airport Israel would hand over a first batch of antiquities, which date back to prehistoric times, in March this year. The last batch would be delivered before the end of 1994, he said. "We signed an agreement which specifies that all Egyptian antiquities discovered between 1967 and 1982 will be recovered," said Mr. Bakr, who was returning from Israel after six days of negotiations with officials there. He displayed 16 battered Arabic manuscripts dating back to the time of the 12th century Arab warrior, Saladin, which he said Israel presented in advance as a sign of good will. Israel excavated 59 sites in Sinai between occupying it in the war of 1967 and handing it back to Egypt in 1982. Mr. Bakr said the several thousand antiquities, which also include pottery and household implements, were priceless.

Pakistanis beheaded in Saudi Arabia
RIYADH (AP) — A Pakistani was beheaded Friday for smuggling heroin into Saudi Arabia, the Interior Ministry announced. Shakerallah Seif Al Rahmani Agoum Khan was the latest of several Pakistanis to be beheaded for the same crime in the kingdom in recent weeks. Nearly 50 men, mainly Pakistanis, have been likewise executed since the mid-1980s when beheading became the legal punishment in the kingdom for drug smuggling. Pakistanis make up a large segment of the foreign labour force in the kingdom, along with other Asians from the subcontinent. Saudi Arabia rules by Islamic law which prescribes beheading for criminals. With drug smuggling spreading after the oil boom years of the 1970s, the kingdom's Muslim theologians ruled that beheading would be valid for the convicted smugglers. Beheadings are carried out in public squares outside mosques following the Friday. The Interior Ministry, reporting the beheading of Khan, which took place in Mecca, warned that others convicted of drug smuggling would suffer the same fate.

Iran pardons 1,700 prisoners

NICOSIA (R) — Iran will release or cut the prison terms of 1,700 convicts to mark the anniversary of the day Muhammad became the Prophet of Islam, the Iranian news agency (IRNA) said. It said the pardon, ordered by supreme leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, covered prisoners convicted by revolutionary, military and civil courts.

JORDAN TIMES DAILY GUIDE AND CALENDAR

JORDAN TELEVISION

Tel: 77111-19

PROGRAMME TWO

18:00 Les Aventures de L'espace
18:30 Reportage
19:00 News in French
19:15 Fete en France
19:30 News in Hebrew
20:00 News in Arabic
20:30 America's Funniest Home Videos
21:00 Prosopics
21:30 Science Workshop
22:00 News in English
22:20 Feature film: "Honey"

PRAYER TIMES

05:09 Fajr
06:30 (Sunrise) Duha
11:40 Dhuhr
14:04 Asr
17:04 Maghrib
18:25 Isha

CHURCHES

St. Mary of Nazareth Church Jeddah, Tel. 810740
Assemblies of God Church, Tel. 63785
St. Joseph Church Tel. 624590
Church of the Assumption Tel. 637440

De la Salle Church Tel. 661757
Terrence Church Tel. 622646
Church of the Assumption Tel. 625441
Church Tel. 630851, Tel. 628543
Assumption Catholic Church Tel. 771331
Assumption Orthodox Church Tel. 772401
St. Ephraim Church Tel. 771751
Assumption International Church Tel. 685326
Evangelical Lutheran Church Tel. 611205
The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints Tel. 623824, 654932
Church of Nazareth Tel. 675691

WEATHER

Bulletin supplied by the Department of Meteorology.

It will be fair and some low clouds will appear, while winds will be north-westerly moderate. In Amman, winds will be northerly moderate and some calm.

Min./Max. temp.

Amman 2/13

Aqaba 6/20

Desert 1/14

Jordan Valley 7/19

USEFUL TELEPHONE NUMBERS

NIGHT DUTY

AMMAN:

Dr. Farooq Noor 786680

Dr. Salah Al-Ussoud 649028

Dr. Rajab Rader 849362

Dr. Hashim Kassar 790286

First pharmacy 661912

First pharmacy 778356

Al Asema pharmacy 637035

Nasrallah pharmacy 623672

Al Salam pharmacy 636720

Yacoub pharmacy 646645

Shawabeh pharmacy 637660

Najm pharmacy 647632

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HOME NEWS IN BRIEF

Jordan, Ukrain discuss joint companies

AMMAN (J.T.) — Ministry of Industry and Trade Secretary General Marwan Awad Thursday met with Mr. Vladimir Puzov, the Ukrainian Minister of Minerals, to discuss the prospects of setting up joint Jordan-Ukrainian companies. Mr. Awad and Mr. Puzov reviewed scopes of potential cooperation and investment and Jordanian laws on encouraging investments. The two sides also discussed trade and economic cooperation.

Deputy Alawneh visits RJ cargo office

AMMAN (Petra) — Chairman of the Agriculture Committee at the Lower House of Parliament Mohammad Al Alawneh visited Thursday the cargo department of Royal Jordanian (RJ). Mr. Alawneh, a former agriculture minister, was familiarised with the department's sections and facilities. The RJ deputy commended the RJ's development and praised the cargo department's role in serving Jordanian farmers and the agriculture sector in the Kingdom. RJ ships Jordanian agricultural produce to Europe with two weekly cargo flights to London and three to Maastricht. The national carrier also transports some produce aboard its passenger flights.

Car accidents take 9 lives, 156 injured

AMMAN (Petra) — Nine people were killed and 156 injured in 343 car accidents in Jordan during the first week of January 1993, according to the weekly statistical report issued by the Traffic Department. The department said the number of accidents dropped by 43, from the week before. Of the total number of accidents, it said, 204 accidents occurred in Amman, 47 in Zarqa, 30 in Irbid, 24 in Mafrag, 24 in the Balqa governorate, 9 in Madaba, 5 in Aqaba, 5 in the Badia regions and 4 in Tafleh.

Lectures to explain earthquake

AMMAN (Petra) — A scientific day entitled "Causes of Earthquakes and Their Impact on Structures" will be organised by the mining and geology section of the Jordanian Engineers Association (JEA) on Jan. 30. The day, which will be opened by Public Works and Housing Minister Saad Hayel Surour, will include lectures on the geology of Jordan, the seismic monitoring networks and the seismology of the Jordan Valley rift.

Health centre opens in Souf

JERASH (Petra) — The United Nations Relief and Works Agency (UNRWA) for Palestine refugees opened Thursday a new health centre in Souf refugee camp near Jerash. The centre, which will offer health care to about 15,000 Palestinian refugees living in the camp, was established at a cost of \$109,000.

Desertification seminar to open Monday

AMMAN (Petra) — A seminar on desertification in Jordan will be opened Monday at the Teachers Club in Amman. Representatives of several ministries, universities and the private sector will participate in the seminar, which is organised by the Ministry of Education in cooperation with the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO). The four-day seminar aims to draw attention to the dangers inherent in desertification which threatens many dry regions of the world. It also aims to spread awareness of ways to solve problems resulting from desertification.

Remote sensing discussed at RJGC

AMMAN (Petra) — The National Committee for Remote Sensing held a meeting Thursday at the Royal Jordanian Geographic Centre (RJGC) and discussed the prospect of introducing concepts related to remote sensing in school curricula. The meeting reviewed the committee's activities in Jordan, including a project on locating appropriate sites for building dams in various parts of the Kingdom. It also reviewed the committee's coordination with Jordanian universities in spreading awareness of the concepts of remote sensing among students. The committee comprises representatives of various ministries, government departments and Jordanian universities.

ESCWA holds transplant seminar

AMMAN (Petra) — The transport and communications section of the Economic and Social Commission of Western Asia (ESCWA) will organise in Amman Saturday a meeting for experts in the field of transport in ESCWA's member states. The meeting, organised in cooperation with the United Nations Trade and Development Conference (UNCTAD), aims to introduce the Multimodal Transport system to ESCWA member states.

Irbid marks Arbor Day

IRBID (Petra) — The Irbid governorate marked Thursday, Arbor Day, by organising a celebration which included planting a large number of trees at Al Nuzha Park in Irbid. Irbid Governor Fayez al Abbadi participated in the celebration along with a number of government officials. Director of the Irbid Agriculture Department Nouredin Al Shuboul delivered an address at the ceremony, in which he outlined efforts exerted by his department to plant trees in the governorate.

Hai Nazzal plants 500 trees

AMMAN (Petra) — Citizens in Hai Nazzal area Friday participated in a voluntary day which included planting 500 forest tree saplings in public parks. The activities of the day were organised by charitable and voluntary societies in the area, as an expression of their intervention with the local society.

WHAT'S GOING ON

The following listings are compiled from monthly bulletins and the daily Arabic press. Readers are advised to verify the listed time and place with the concerned institutions.

EXHIBITIONS

- ★ Exhibition entitled "Latin American Countries in France" at the French Cultural Centre.
- ★ Exhibition entitled "Modernist Still Life Photographed" at the American Centre.

LECTURES

- ★ Lectures and illustrations on "The Sublime Landscape of Turner: A Comparative Study" by Mrs. Nelly Lama at the British Council — 6 p.m.
- ★ Lecture, in Arabic, entitled "The Gians' Race and the Fate of the World Economy" by Dr. Basel Al Bostani, economy professor at the University of Baghdad, at the Scientific and Cultural Centre of Abdul Hammed Shoman Foundation — 6 p.m.



Spanish foreign minister briefs Sharif Zeid

Spanish minister ends visit

AMMAN (J.T.) — Spanish Foreign Minister Javier Solana Saturday concludes a three-day visit to Jordan and leaves for Damascus. Mr. Solana, who will also visit Egypt, arrived in Amman Wednesday and held discussions on Spanish-Jordanian relations and the Middle East with Prime Minister Sharif Zeid Ben Shaker and Foreign Minister Kamel Abu Jaber. A statement from the Prime Ministry said Sharif Zeid told Mr. Solana the Arab World expects the United Nations to adopt a unified standard with regard to its resolutions, otherwise, it would risk losing its credibility. It said Jordan and Spain agreed that U.N. Security Council Resolution 799, calling for the repatriation of 413 Palestinians exiled from Israel, should be implemented. The statement said the prime minister and the Spanish foreign minister agreed to promote Jordanian-Spanish cooperation in various fields, and in a manner reflecting the strong ties of friendship between their countries.

Jordanians urge end of sanctions on Iraq

By Jamal Halaby
The Associated Press

AMMAN — Leading Jordanian personalities Friday urged the government to break an international embargo clamped on Iraq since its August 1990 invasion of Kuwait.

In a statement made available to the Associated Press (AP), more than 300 notables said Jordan "should spearhead Arab efforts to alleviate the suffering of the Iraqi people."

"The unjust sanctions on Iraq should be lifted and that could be done by discarding the oppressive international resolutions and ending the official Jordanian embargo against Iraq," the statement said.

"It is our duty to struggle and make tangible steps to break those sanctions and reject the government's excuses justifying its compliance with the resolutions of the new world order which is inimical to our (Arab) Nation, our religion and our national interests," it said.

Italian aid distributed in Jordan

By Maha Adhisi
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — An Italian military aircraft loaded with food, medical supplies and clothing for Jordan's needy arrived in Amman Thursday, said Ernesto Oliviero, the founder of "Sermig," an Italian peace group.

"Thirty years ago I founded Sermig as a point of peace to try to create harmony all over the world," Mr. Oliviero said at a press gathering Thursday. "Today I brought the thirtieth aircraft of aid to Jordan as a form of solidarity of the Italian people with the needy people of Jordan."

The aid distributed Friday by the Jordanian branch of Caritas, a charity organisation, went to three categories of the needy, according to Father Musa, director of Caritas.

"The first category is the poorest of the poor in Jordan, the second is the returnees and evacuees from the Gulf crisis, and

the third is the people of Iraq who are most in need of food and medicine," Father Musa said.

Sermig, which is a spiritual community and not a political party, has 600 active members.

About 300,000 Italians contributed to aid shipments to Jordan, valued at \$10 million, since the end of the Gulf war, Mr. Oliviero added.

He said Sermig does not only distribute aid in the form of food and clothing, but it is also responsible for the initiation of projects around the world "supported by youth, financially endorsed by people and animated by these same people."

Mr. Oliviero said these projects aim at self-development for the people they benefit.

The Italian Ambassador to Jordan, Romualdo Bettini, said Mr. Oliviero's work has been extensive for many years, in many different areas in the world.

"Ernesto is a living miracle," Dr. Bettini said.

end what looks like double standards in the pursuit of the American policy and will gear U.S. policy more towards international legitimacy," Dr. Shakh told a news conference in Cairo.

"We hope ... Mr. Clinton will be the proper man at the helm of the United States in this crucial period ... bringing about peace and justice to the Middle East ... respect for human rights, and greater concern for Palestinians under occupation," he added.

He linked the new law on contact with the PLO to Israel's expulsion of hundreds of Palestinians to Lebanon.

"I would like to make it clear that in no way will we consider the passing of this law in any way a compensation for the war crimes committed by Mr. Rabin when he deported the 400 Palestinians."

He said the men, accused of links with violent groups, must be brought home before Arab-Israeli talks could resume.

"It will be very difficult, actually impossible to go through with a dialogue with the Israeli government at the upper level until the deportees are back ... until Israel rescinds and ends its rule which led to the deportation," he said.

He said ending the ban on contacts with the PLO was a positive step, nevertheless. "No doubt this is a positive step. It ends, it corrects actually a major breach by a country which proclaims to go through peaceful negotiations."

Dr. Shakh said the PLO welcomed dialogue with Israelis who

House to discuss civil service
Deputies demand cigarette surcharge

AMMAN (J.T.) — The Lower House of Parliament will Sunday "exchange views" with the government on civil service appointments since the beginning of 1990 to check any irregularities and favouritism in granting work opportunities to job seekers.

The debate comes at the request of 15 deputies who, on Jan. 13, demanded that the House discuss alleged "injustices" in civil service appointments.

The deputies asked for a government list of names and graduation dates of all citizens hired by government agencies and public companies since the beginning of 1990 until the end of 1992, so that the House can have "a serious and objective debate" of what they called an "imbalance that intensifies the social threat of unemployment."

The government cited procedural irregularities for refusing to provide the House with the list, after one deputy said the debate might lead to a vote of no confidence in the government. Deputy Prime Minister and Education

Minister Thouqan al Hindawi said the government was "infallible," and might have made some mistakes in awarding work opportunities, but insisted deputies used proper channels charted by the internal regulations of the House for questioning the government.

The minister argued that Article 104 of the House's internal regulations, according to which deputies made their request, says that Parliament and government can "exchange points of view" on issues of public interest if 10 or more deputies demand so in writing.

The article, he said, does not allow for raising a vote of no confidence in the government, and the list of appointments will therefore be denied.

Deputies argued they were not aiming for a vote of no confidence and had the legal grounds for demanding the list.

The House finally decided to discuss the deputies' request in its session on Sunday without settling the debate or asking the

government to provide the list.

In its session, the House will also discuss a report by the Ministry of Social Development on alleged manipulation of the results of the national lottery.

In a report to the House, the ministry said the General Union of Voluntary Societies, which supervises the lottery, had referred a case to the General Prosecutor involving alleged illegal manipulation of the lottery's result after a committee decided the case needed to be investigated.

The House will also listen to the minister's answers to a number of deputies' question on issues of public interest.

The House Foreign Affairs and Palestinian committees will convene separately Monday to discuss the latest developments on the Palestinian issue.

Meanwhile 57 members of the Lower House of Parliament have demanded a government surcharge on cigarettes and vehicle exhaust fumes and that revenues from these surcharges be transferred to the Al Amal Cancer

Centre, scheduled to open by the end of 1993.

In a memorandum to the government, the group suggested that a 20 fils surcharge be added to each cigarette packer, JD 2 be imposed annually on car exhausts, and unspecified fees be imposed on factories contributing to pollution.

The memorandum said cigarette smoke and car and factory fumes are among the main cancer causing factors.

The Al Amal Cancer Centre, which plans to offer free medical services to cancer patients, will need substantial funds to carry out its task the memorandum said.

It added that the Centre will have to re-pay a \$5 million loan from the Jeddah-based Islamic Development Bank over 15 years, compounding its financial responsibilities.

The national committee in charge of fund-raising for new centre announced at least JD 3 million will be needed annually to cover operational costs.

QAF carries out nutrition programmes

AMMAN (Petra) — Queen Alia Jordan Social Welfare Fund (QAF) last year carried out three nutrition programmes for children and mothers in Maan, Karak, Tafleh and Mafrag. In cooperation with international organisations, the programmes benefited 10,309 women and 10,332 children.

The QAF implemented a nutrition programme targeted at pre-school age children and women taking part in vocational training programmes.

The programme, carried out in cooperation with the Ministry of Education and the World Food Programme, benefited 1,798 children and 2,336 women.

Another nutrition programme was the effort of the Fund in cooperation with the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF).

The programme covered 17 locations in Aqaba, and targeted children aged between 6 months and 6-years-old and pregnant and nursing women.

Benefiting from this programme were 2,500 children and 7,973 women.

It was supplemented by a health education programme, including information on children's growth monitoring, detection of early signs of malnutrition and first aid.

A third project, initiated in 1992 in cooperation with the Canadian Care (Cooperative of American Relief Everywhere), targeted children under six years.

Benefiting from this programme were 6,034 children.

Jordan, Morocco call for customs exemption

AMMAN (J.T.) — Following three days of trade talks in Amman, Jordan and Morocco recommend a review of the legal framework governing trade between the two countries and a customs exemption on certain national products, said a Ministry of Industry and Trade statement.

Minutes of the meeting, calling for greater bilateral cooperation in industry-related fields and organising industrial fairs to promote sales of the two countries' national products, were signed at the ministry Thursday.

According to the statement, Jordan proposed that both countries begin a joint-venture to operate cargo vessels between their ports.

The next meeting of the Jordanian-Moroccan committee will be held soon in Amman, the statement said.

The minutes of the meeting were signed by Ministry of Industry and Trade Secretary General Marwan Awad and head of the Moroccan team Rashad Abu Hilal.

France, Germany stress need to comply with 799

By Elia Nasrallah
Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — In a joint press conference in Amman Thursday, the French and German ambassadors to Jordan, French Ambassador Denis Bouchard and U.N. Security Council Resolution 799 calling for the immediate return of the 413 Palestinians exiled by Israel, wants to implement its credibility.

Mr. Bouchard also said the assumption of the U.S. presidency by Bill Clinton would lead to a change in U.S. policy towards Iraq with the disappearance of the "personal factor." But he added President Saddam Hussein must comply with U.N. sanctions.

German ambassador Heinrich Reimers, who hosted the press conference at his residence on the 30th anniversary of the signing of the Elysee-Treaty on Franco-German cooperation, said Bonn has criticised Israel's action and

has demanded the implementation of Resolution 799. He added that he believed Israel would "eventually give in."

Mr. Bouchard said French President Francois Mitterrand, on a recent trip to Israel, demanded that the Israeli government deal with the Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO).

The ambassador added that perhaps it was this determined and firm stand on the part of the French President that prompted the Israel Knesset lift the ban on contacts with the PLO.

Asked to comment on reports that U.N. sanctions could be imposed on Israel should it continue to defy Resolution 799, Mr. Bouchard said Chapter VII of the U.N. Charter states "sanctions shall be imposed only for actions regarded by the world community as threatening world peace."

Mr. Reimers said with the advent of peace in the Middle East, Europe would be more encouraged to pursue Europ-Arab dialogue and foster bilateral ties.

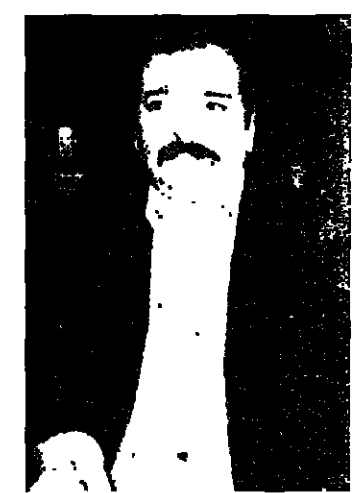
Al Razzaz to head JADP

AMMAN (J.T.) — The Jordanian Arab Democratic Party (JADP) Thursday elected Munis Al Razzaz as its secretary general, according to a report in Al Dustour Arabic daily.

Mr. Razzaz, the son of the late Munif Al Razzaz, a prominent leader of the Ba'ath Party, is a novelist and a columnist at Al Dustour. He gave up political writing in Al Dustour, following the attack by the U.S.-led alliance against Iraq in 1990.

The party's general assembly elected Mazen Al Saket, Samir Habashneh, Mohammad Daoudieh, Mahmoud Al Amlah, Mohammad Al Bashir, Mohammad Al Qaisi, Muwaffaq Al Rahafieh, Mousa Al Azraie, Ayman Al Masri and Saad Bani Hani to its 10-member executive committee. The general assembly will seek legal licensing by the government within the next two months. Following the licensing process the party will hold its first constituent meeting.

The general assembly gave the



Munis Al Razzaz executive committee the authority to join the Jordanian Arab National Democratic Alliance (At-Tajammu') and to hold dialogues with other political parties and alliance with a view towards joining other unionist blocks or parties.

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Editor-in-Chief:
GEORGE S. HAWATMEH

Editorial and advertising offices:

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University Road, P.O. Box 6710, Amman, Jordan.

Telephones: 667171/6, 670141-4

Telex: 21497 ALRAI JO

Facsimile: 661242

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Law on corruption?

THE FIGHT against corruption in government is a worthy cause that obviously enjoys wide public support and is definitely prompted by so many stories and yet few proven cases of abuse of public office. But the crusade for clean government is also engulfed by political intrigue and sensationalism that might push some of us, like our honourable legislators, to cross the fine line of drafting effective anti-corruption laws into the domain of electioneering. There is a difference here in that the latter causes not only unnecessary noise but could also encroach on individual rights without effectively achieving the purpose behind it.

It is in this light in fact that the draft law on the illegal acquisition of wealth has to be seen and addressed. The as-yet-unfinished bill is expected to cause a confrontation between the Upper and Lower Houses of Parliament when they debate it in a joint session soon after the Senate asked for amendments in it.

To fight alleged corruption in the country, we do not need new laws at all. So why the two houses are bothered with debating the legislation in the first place is unknown to us. There are enough laws in the country that can sufficiently check and weed out any illegal practices in government. What might be missing is the will and courage to activate them when necessary. Also, the draft law that was passed by the Lower House this month after deputies rejected the amendments of the Senate only inflates a bureaucracy that parliamentarians and government officials alike contend is plagued by inefficiency.

The proposed bill calls for the creation of a special department at the Ministry of Justice to monitor and keep accounts of the liquid and fixed assets of both high-ranking government officials and holders and legislators. The proposed department has the right to ask for financial statements from senior public officials upon appointment and to periodically thereafter check against unlawful increases of wealth. If it finds evidence establishing any illegal practices, the department can refer suspects to the "concerned authorities."

That, we believe, is an unnecessary waste of time and resources. Other judicial and government agencies can perform exactly the same task. The tax department, for instance, should have access to information on individuals' wealth and annual income. Its responsibilities can be expanded to monitor and then report questionable increases in officials' wealth during their term of office to the "concerned authorities."

The fight against corruption can best be launched by consolidating the present laws and rules of ethics and democracy in society. That means enforcing all laws and holding all citizens accountable under them.

It is in this direction that Parliament should steer its efforts, utilising the remaining time of its current session to complete unfinished business that can strengthen the pillars of our embryonic democratic process and put under more scrutiny the performance of government.

ARABIC PRESS COMMENTARIES

BILL CLINTON, who has become the 42nd president of the United States, has an unenviable inheritance left over to him by President Bush, whose behaviour and policies smeared American's reputation everywhere in the world, said Al Ra'i Arabic daily. Mr. Bush, according to many observers, has handed over to Mr. Clinton an inheritance that would continue to harm America's interests should the new man in the White House continue to pursue the same double standard policies of his predecessor, the paper said. By having asked the White House officials who had perpetrated the Gulf war to retain their posts, Mr. Clinton is more likely to follow in the footsteps of Mr. Bush, the paper pointed out. Therefore, it said, the Arabs should not count on a change in Washington's policies that might or might not come, rather they ought to rely on their own strength and ability to change, and this can be done through ending their differences and unifying their position before the world. The continued weak Arab stand, due to lack of solidarity and coordination, can only encourage the new administration to follow the same policies charted by Bush and his men with regard to the Gulf and Palestine alike, said the paper. It said that the time has come for the Arabs to realise that any change in U.S. behaviour towards them can be triggered by real and serious change in their present stand and their resolve to secure their own rights and safeguard their own interests.

FAHEH AL FANEK, a columnist in Al Ra'i daily, suggested that Jordan should have an international newspaper, to be called Jordan International, similar to other Arabic and foreign dailies which are being printed in European capitals and find their way to countries all over the world. The writer said that Jordan has a major role to play in the Palestine question and in numerous Arab causes, and the Jordanian people's stand during the Gulf war and Israel's continued atrocities against the Palestinians should be heard not in Jordan alone, but in as many countries as possible so that the Kingdom's voice can reach various parts of the world. The writer said that in view of the huge amounts of funds required for the project, the three Jordanian dailies can make a joint effort towards its execution. Such a newspaper, he said, could attract advertisements from various nations and would be used to stimulate the tourism industry in Jordan featuring the country's huge resources of archaeological sites. He said that the projected newspaper would attract the best writers and so ensure a wide circulation in the Arab World and beyond.

Fateh anniversary — giving credit where it is due

By Pascal Karay

Dec. 31, 1992-Jan. 1, 1993 marked the 28th anniversary of the Palestinian armed struggle against Israeli occupation of Palestinian territory. This date also marked the 36th anniversary of the creation of the Fateh movement.

The occupation of Gaza and Sinai by Israel in 1956, in conjunction with the attack on Egypt by Britain and France, was a turning point for the Palestinians. The latter came to realise that the Arab states will not be able to return them to their homeland, Palestine. As a result, the Palestine National Liberation Movement (Harakat Al Tahrir Al Watani Al Palestini, whose initials, in reverse in Arabic, gave the name Fateh) was created.

Some Palestinians do not appreciate the struggle led by Fateh since its inception in 1956, and particularly after 1967. It was still the backbone of the Palestinian liberation movement. It has been and is now a very important component of the PLO. We must give credit to whom and where it is due. Hopefully, this article will make those who try for one reason or another to belittle the role of Fateh in the Palestine national movement change their mind. But it is not intended to overlook the laudable Palestinian national struggle of other Palestinian movements, such as the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine (PFLP), the Popular Democratic Front for the Liberation of Palestine (PDFLP) or the Islamic Hamas.

After the occupation of Palestine by Israel, following the 1948 war, there were numerous raids by Palestinians on Israel's borders, particularly in 1954, from Gaza Strip, Jordan and Syria. Those who committed the raids, called infiltrators, were subsequently called Fidayyin, meaning those who sacrifice themselves. The late Abu Jihad (Khalil al Wazir), an important leader of Fateh, participated in the first raid on Israel in 1954 from Gaza Strip. Those raids were disorganised, but were encouraged by some Arab countries. Some of those raids were motivated by the Palestinians who were trying to recuperate some of the properties left behind after being expelled by Israel. The Fidayyin raids were used by Israel as a pretext for the invasion of Sinai and the consequent attack on Egypt by Britain and France in 1956, as mentioned above. As is well-known, Israel, Britain and France withdrew their forces from Egyptian territory, in compliance with several resolutions of the General Assembly issued at its emergency sessions held during November 1956. The Security Council was deadlocked because of the use of veto by Britain and France.

The first shot inaugurating the Palestinian resistance against Israel was heard at midnight on Dec. 31, 1964-Jan. 1, 1965. It was the blowing up of a water pumping installation belonging to Israel near the Hebron-Bethlehem road. The blowing up of the installation was carried out by Al Asifa, the military arm of Fateh, which was then unknown to the public. This resistance continued to this day and was transformed into the intifada as of December 1987.

Following the above action, leaflets were distributed to Beirut newspapers containing Military Communiqué No. 1 signed by the General Command of Al Asifa. The Communiqué mentioned, among other things: "On the night of Friday, Dec. 31, 1964-Jan. 1, 1965, detachments of our strike forces went into action, performing all the tasks assigned to them in the occupied territories and returning safely to their bases." It then addressed the Israelis, warning them not to take any action against peaceful Arab civilians wherever they might be because "our forces, deeming such actions war crimes, will reply in kind."

In a second communiqué, which was of a political character, Al Asifa announced that its forces were to prove to the enemy and to the world that the Palestinian people were not dead and that the armed struggle is the only way to achieve victory and the

return to Palestine." In expressing the will of the revolutionary Palestinian people, Al Asifa forces were fully conscious of the difficult political and military struggle which they have to lead, but they relied on their own forces and on the strength and vigour of the Palestinian people to overcome all obstacles.

Initially, resistance operations were on a limited scale. They were confined to the destruction of isolated installations, water conduits and the like. Fateh, which covers al Asifa, had at that time limited resources to enable it to carry out big operations. Right from the beginning, Fateh tried to enlist young Palestinians from the extreme right and the extreme left. They did not need to renounce their personal opinions but they had to cut off any connection with any party to which they belonged. They have faith only in the armed struggle for the liberation of Palestine.

Indeed, the absence of any ideology for Fateh is one of its main characteristics. In explaining the reasons for creating the Fateh movement one of its leaders declared: "We came to the conclusion that unless we decide to take our destiny in our hands, no person will do anything for us. Experience taught us that the usurpers ignored our appeals, our declarations and our petitions. Thus we had no choice; we had to take up arms."

One of the acute problems which faced the founders of Fateh was the question of funds. They could not solicit funds from anybody as they were in clandestinity. Most of the founders, being highly educated, looked for work in the Gulf states. Thus, Yasser Arafat went to Kuwait in 1957 to work as an engineer, Abu Iyad (Salah Khalaf) followed him as a teacher, Abu Youssef (Mohammad Najjar) went to Qatar, and Abu Jihad (Khalil al Wazir) also to the Gulf. Two petroleum engineers, Abu Lutf (Farouq Qadumi) and Kamal Adwan worked in Saudi Arabia and Qatar respectively. Khaled Has-

san (Abu Said) worked as secretary of the Municipality of Kuwait. All of them contributed to the funds of Fateh. Hani Hassan, who had a substantial and successful enterprise in Germany, contributed largely to Fateh. After accumulating the necessary funds, they left the Gulf states. Fateh established a Palestinian revue called "Filastina" (Our Palestine) which was then supervised by Abu Jihad.

After the Arab defeat in 1967, guerrilla warfare by Fateh commanded a great appeal to the Arab masses. Fateh announced that it was transferring its headquarters to the newly-occupied territories. Arafat and some of his assistants crossed the Jordan River to mastermind the bold new strategy. David Hirst in his book "The Gun and the Olive Branch" says about this event the following: "Hitherto, the Fidayyin had largely confined themselves to hit and run incursions, but now Arafat had the opportunity to forge a self-sustaining guerrilla movement out of that segment of his people, well over a million, who had fallen under direct Israeli rule."

In going over the history of Fateh since its first resistance act in 1965 one can rank it among the noble self-sacrificing movements. Its history is marked by tragedies, but it recorded honourable feats during its struggle and no fair-minded person can detract from its achievements. It has sustained the morale of the Arab nation and awakened the Palestinian people after the tragic defeat of the Arab states in 1967. It is Fateh which first started the guerrilla resistance movement against Israeli occupation. It is this movement which had greatly contributed to putting the Palestine problem on the agenda of the United Nations General Assembly in 1974. It is perhaps one of the first movements whose many top leaders fell victim to Israeli terrorism, among whom were Kamal Adwan, Kamal Nasser, Abu Youssef (Mohammad Najjar), Abu Jihad (Khalil al Wazir) and Abu Iyad (Salah Khalaf).

THE WEEK IN PRINT

Government officials accused of 'bias' in appointing employees

Reviewed by Elia Nasrallah

Over the past week, the local press gave prominence to resumed air raids on Iraq, the change of guard in the White House and a host of domestic issues.

A columnist in Al Dustour drew attention to a serious situation referred to by the Upper House of Parliament's Financial Committee which noted that the Kingdom has failed to deal with the question of rising unemployment due to the continued flow of guest workers into Jordan.

Mohammad Daoud quoted the committee as saying in its report that over the past six years the number of guest workers rose from 143,000 to 176,000, demanding that appropriate and effective measures be taken to deal with this serious situation.

His colleague in Al Dustour, Mohammad Subeichi, tackled the Lower House's planned discussion of the appointments in various government offices over the past three years against rumours and accusations that nepotism and favouritism were the norms in appointing.

The writer said it is clear that many deputies want the House to debate this issue in order to expose ministers and senior government officials accused of being involved in such a practice. But the writer noted that quite a good number of Parliament members were involved in mediating for their relatives and their friends, to be appointed in government offices, noting that such a debate would be double-edged.

The writer, however, went along with this demand and expressed hope that the government would allow the Parliament session discussing this issue to be broadcast live on radio and television so that everyone would be served with equal justice.

Hamadeh Faraaneh, a columnist in Al Dustour, tackled the question of political parties, noting that the government has now opened the way for leftist groups to be legalised after recognising the Jordanian Democratic Progressive Party. The writer noted however that legalisation came only af-

ter the new group pledged to respect all the provisions of the constitution and the National Charter and also as a result of the positive dialogue that was conducted among the five Jordanian leftist parties.

The writer considered the legalisation of the leftist parties as a success for Jordanian democracy and an indicator that more openness towards various political trends would be observed and encouraged.

Khalid Mansour, another columnist in Al Dustour, tackled the question of young men shying away from marriage. The writer expressed the view that the economic circumstances were forcing many men to postpone marriage and were imposing new concepts on marriage. He also said that results of many "early marriages" proved to be failures or fraught with many dangers and difficulties.

On the whole, he said, delaying marriage for too long was no less harmful than early marriages. He said that the debate of such an important question, as was done in a series of programmes, was insufficient and that deeper and more comprehensive discussions at all levels were required to deal with this important social problem.

A columnist in Al Ra'i daily discussed the ordeal of the Arab inhabitants in Palestinian territories occupied since 1948. Ghazi Saadi said that these Arabs, who in 1948 numbered 1,400,000 and now have reached 900,000, have no clear identity since they are considered Israeli nationals but are treated as second class citizens.

The writer said that large numbers of these Arabs have lost their lands through Israeli confiscations and feel lost and unable to maintain their Arab identity as they are forced to use Hebrew in schools, at work and in all their activities' fields.

The writer urged the Arab countries to create cultural societies linking Arabs under Israeli rule before and after the 1967 occupation, and urged the Arab citizens holding Israeli nationality to try to unify their ranks and elect representatives in the Knesset who can best

represent the Arab interest.

Bill Clinton's administration was tackled by editorials and columns in the local press.

Sawt Al Shaab daily said the Arabs hope that the new Clinton administration would introduce drastic changes in Washington's foreign policies that would end the U.S. involvement in wars and aggression.

Under Mr. Bush, America had been responsible for many sufferings caused to other nations and over the past four years too many conflicts were created largely due to the policies adopted by the U.S.-led western alliance.

But a columnist in Al Dustour cast doubts about real change that could take place in Washington's policies in the new era.

Saleh Al Qallab said that there was no real difference in views between Mr. Bush and Mr. Clinton over foreign affairs. Mr. Clinton, the writer said, was more oriented towards tackling domestic affairs and improving the U.S. economy. Furthermore, he noted, Mr. Clinton had announced that improvement of relations with Baghdad depended on the Iraqi leadership alone.

Mr. Bush was the object of attack by many columnists for his hostile attitude towards the Arabs in general and his aggression on Iraq in particular. Fahd Al Faneh, who writes for Al Ra'i, said that Mr. Bush will be remembered only in the garbage of history where he meets with all the elements of darkness and aggression. The aggression on Iraq under Mr. Bush's administration constituted a disgrace for the United States which pointed its guns at children and women, and starved the Iraqi people.

Mohammad Kawashteh, a columnist in Al Dustour, said that no one would feel sorry for Mr. Bush or would ever remember that he did anything good to the world.

The writer said that though we realise that Mr. Clinton holds no olive branch towards Iraq and could adhere to the old policies towards the Arabs, no one can forget the blood bath caused by the outgoing

san (Abu Said) worked as secretary of the Municipality of Kuwait. All of them contributed to the funds of Fateh. Hani Hassan, who had a substantial and successful enterprise in Germany, contributed largely to Fateh. After accumulating the necessary funds, they left the Gulf states. Fateh established a Palestinian revue called "Filastina" (Our Palestine) which was then supervised by Abu Jihad.

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Clinton's appointments

The following is an editorial that appeared in the Jan. 20 issue of the Israeli English-language daily The Jerusalem Post.

Bill Clinton's campaign promises to make fundamental changes in the way America is run were extravagant. But such is the nature of challengers' rhetoric. Inevitably, he scales down expectations on assuming office.

Nor is it surprising that he should form an executive machinery run by warmed-over remnants of the Carter administration — hardly harbingers of revolutionary change. After all, the Democrats were in government only in four out of the past 24 years. Unless he wanted complete novices, Clinton had to turn to Carter Democrats — officials who ran one of the most miserably unsuccessful administrations of the century — to fill key posts.

But this is small comfort for Israel and its friends. Carter may be remembered as the sponsor of the Camp David accords and the Israel-Egypt peace treaty. But he and his administration worked tirelessly against Israel, first in collaboration with the USSR to impose a settlement on Israel, then in supporting the Arab side in the negotiations.

Now Clinton spokesmen are trying to aver that only "Likud supporters, hardliners and neo-conservatives" are opposed to re-regulated Carter policies. But even super-dovish liberals saw the Carter administration as hostile.

Reform Rabbi Alexander Schneider, who headed the President's Conference of Major Jewish Organisations in the Carter era, has asserted that "Carter managed to jeopardise the security of Israel," and worried about "the expectations Carter is raising in the Arab World." Abe Foxman, executive director of the Anti-Defamation League, has said Carter's Middle East policies were "simplistic, preachy, and involved holding Israel to standards that were unreasonable."

Now Israelis must hope that Clinton's cabinet, for all its reliance on ex-Carterites, will be less biased. American Jewish leaders, who fervently supported Clinton, point to the outstanding pro-Israel statements made by him during the campaign.

He praised Israel's strike against the Iraqi nuclear reactor, vowed to "do everything I can to see that the Arab states end this boycott," demanded Arab concessions in the peace negotiations, and promised that the "Clinton administration will treat the Arab-Israeli conflict as one in which the survival of Israel is at stake." This is certainly more than Carter ever said when he ran for election.

But Clinton's appointments make it difficult to be optimistic. Neither his Secretary of State Warren Christopher, nor National Security Adviser Anthony Lake, nor Under Secretary of State for Political Affairs Peter Tarnoff — all ex-Carter men — have ever shown sympathy for Israel's position.

They were all involved in formulating a Middle East policy which sought to return Israel to

the 1949 armistice lines and establish a Palestinian state in Judea, Samaria (West Bank) and Gaza, and they all showed inordinate tolerance for Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) terrorism.

Christopher fathered the idea of linking strategic aid to Israel with arms sales to the Arab countries, a policy which was designed to paralyse the powerful Israeli lobby. Unlike any other U.S. government, the Carter administration termed the Jewish settlements in the administered territories "illegal."

Nor are these appointments an isolated phenomenon. Clinton's partiality for leftovers from the "new left" crowd of the 1970s is apparent in other areas. The transition team's coordinator for education and labour issues is Spelman College president Johnetta Cole, a Fidel Castro groupie who named her son Che after Che Guevara. She was connected with the "U.S. Peace Council" which collaborates with the PLO.

Clinton's Secretary of Health and Human Services is Donna Shalala, chancellor of the University of Wisconsin in Madison. She is a leading advocate of "political correctness," that insidious form of thought control masquerading as liberalism and egalitarianism.

But perhaps Clinton's most worrisome appointment is Samuel (Sandy) Berger, a financial contributor to "Americans for Peace Now," who has been nominated as Deputy National Security Adviser. Israel's Peace Now, which unlike the vast majority of Israelis opposed the expulsion of the Hamas inciters, represents a small minority within Israel.

Its American friends represent an even tinier part of the American Jewish community. In opposition to the overwhelming majority of American Jews, it actively opposed the granting of loan guarantees by the Bush administration, demanding that they be linked to the complete cessation of settlement activity. It has also actively lobbied for negotiations with the PLO. One of its leaders has even defended the U.S. sale of F-15s to Saudi Arabia.

Thus Clinton's appointees to foreign policy positions represent neither mainstream Jewish-American opinion nor a centrist Israeli position. On Middle East issues, his administration is composed almost exclusively of Yossi Sarid and Shulamit Aloni counterparts.

The American Jewish community is uneasy about these officials. But instead of demanding the appointment of known pro-Israel figures, it has derided the absence of Jews in the new administration. Considering the record of the Jewish "gang of four" around former secretary of state James Baker, this clamor for the "right" ethnic identity seems ludicrous.

What Israel and its friends need is not Jewish officials who perform somersaults to prove they are impartial, but intelligent executives who will follow the eminently sensible policies articulated by Clinton in his campaign.

LETTERS

Hope for wiser U.S. Mideast policy

Following is a cable sent by Lawyer Saleem Swais, of the Front of National Action to the U.S. President Bill Clinton:

Dear Sir,

We appreciated your stand against the war in Vietnam as well as your policy for domestic peace in America.

We hope that you will have the courage of J.F. Kennedy, the good-heartedness of J. Carter and the spirit of justice of Ramsey Clark.

We feel sorry for the blind support you lent to the crimes of Bush who has been waging a dirty war against the people of Iraq for 30 months, causing, with the embargo, the death of hundreds of thousands of innocent people.

Bush's name will be mentioned in the Arab history side by side with the one of Cyrus the Persian and Hulegu the Mongol. The first one destroyed Babylon, the centre of world civilisation in antiquity, the second destroyed Baghdad, the centre of world civilisation in the Middle East.

Bush acted the same when he boasted that he took Iraq to the pre-industrial era, a crime which is more horrible than the American crime in Hiroshima.

We hope that you will act wisely, stop the aggression against Iraq and lift the embargo enforced upon the elders and children, deprived of medicine and milk, and serve the interest of the American nation, not those of tribal families of the Gulf and the Arab Peninsula, who represent the corrupt regimes in the Middle East.

We wish you success in serving humanity and the small nations' aspiration to independence and peace.

The Jordan Times welcomes letters and contributions from its readers on any subject they wish to tackle. Letters intended for publication, however, should contain the writer's full name and preferably address as well. Names can be withheld only upon request and under special circumstances. Letters are subject to editing. The newspaper is not responsible for the return of unused manuscripts.

كلنا من الامم

Financial Markets

Jordan Times
In co-operation with
Cairo Amman Bank

U.S. Dollar in International Markets

Currency	New York Close Date 20/1/93	Tokyo Close Date 21/1/93
Sterling Pound	1.5450	1.5438
Deutsche Mark	1.6009	1.6047
Swiss Franc	1.4673	1.4698
French Franc	5.4150	5.4215
Japanese Yen	124.65	124.68
European Currency Unit	1.2235	1.2242

USD Per SYG
European Options at 8:00 a.m. (GMT)

Interbank Interest Rates Date: 21/1/93

Currency	1 MTH	3 MTHS	6 MTHS	12 MTHS
U.S. Dollar	3.06	3.18	3.31	3.75
Sterling Pound	6.87	6.68	6.56	6.50
Deutsche Mark	6.62	6.31	6.08	7.45
Swiss Franc	5.43	5.45	5.43	5.31
French Franc	11.62	11.25	10.25	9.25
Japanese Yen	3.81	3.68	3.56	3.45
European Currency Unit	9.75	9.75	9.50	8.87

Interbank bid rates for accounts exceeding U.S. Dollars 1,000,000 or equivalent.

Previous Metals Date: 21/1/93

Metal	USD/Oz	JD/Gm	Metal	USD/Oz	JD/Gm
Gold	329.85	6.45	Silver	3.73	.080

Central Bank of Jordan Exchange Rate Bulletin Date: 21/1/93

Currency	Bid	Offer
U.S. Dollar	0.686	0.688
Sterling Pound	1.0591	1.0644
Deutsche Mark	0.4277	0.4298
Swiss Franc	0.4670	0.4693
French Franc	0.1266	0.1272
Japanese Yen	0.5498	0.5525
Dutch Guilder	0.3803	0.3822
Swedish Krona	0.0959	0.0964
Italian Lira	0.0469	0.0471
Belgian Franc	0.02075	0.02085

Other Currencies Date: 21/1/93

Currency	Bid	Offer
Bahraini Dinar	1.7890	1.8120
Lebanese Lira	0.036885	0.036885
Saudi Riyal	0.1820	0.1833
Kuwaiti Dinar	2.2250	2.2800
Qatari Riyal	0.1850	0.1869
Egyptian Pound	0.2000	0.2150
Omani Riyal	1.7400	1.7650
UAE Dirham	0.1850	0.1849
Greek Drachma	0.31325	0.32325
Cypriot Pound	1.4335	1.4448

CAR Indices for Amman Financial Market

Index	18/1/1993	Close	19/1/1993	Close
AB-Share	185.21		188.71	
Banking Sector	134.23		136.57	
Insurance Sector	202.85		205.87	
Industry Sector	253.93		259.72	
Services Sector	251.81		252.25	

December 31, 1992 - 100

LONDON EXCHANGE RATES

LONDON (R) — Following are the buying and selling rates for leading world currencies and gold against the dollar at midsession on the London Foreign Exchange and bullion markets Friday.

One U.S. dollar	1.2862/67	Canadian dollar	1.6100/10
	1.8080/90	Deutsche marks	1.4767/77
	1.4767/77	Dutch guilders	33.13/17
	5.4475/525	Swiss francs	1483/1488
	124.85/90	Belgian francs	7.2100/200
	124.85/90	French francs	6.8350/450
	124.85/90	Italian lire	6.1800/900
	124.85/90	Japanese yen	1.5150/60
	124.85/90	Swedish crowns	329.30/329.80
	124.85/90	Norwegian crowns	
	124.85/90	Danish crowns	

One sterling 1.5150/60
One ounce of gold 329.30/329.80

Japanese workers face skimpy pay rise in '93

TOKYO (R) — In a reflection of Japan's economic downturn, an influential employers' group has said that pay rises for workers in the coming year should be drastically limited.

The Japan Federation of Employers' Association (Nikkeiren) said labour should not expect increases much beyond those granted last year, in order to ease the burden on struggling companies.

"The most important subject in basic management policies is to maintain and secure employment," Nikkeiren said in a report.

The comments, the first salvo in annual wage negotiations usually held in March and April, reflect the close relationship between employer and employee in Japan.

According to the unwritten rules of Japan's lifetime employment system, employees are supposed to accept low increases in return for being kept on the payroll when times are tough.

The annual wage increase

holds profound implications for the nation's ability to pull out of a prolonged economic downturn.

Criticising labour's demand this year that employers raise wages by some seven per cent or an average of more than 20,000 yen (\$160) a month, Nikkeiren said: "The demand by labour, which is little changed from a year ago, is completely unrealistic."

Last year, the regular annual rise agreed between management and labour was a scant 2.3 per cent.

That would leave wage earners with virtually the same earning power as the 1991-92 fiscal year since the consumer price index is climbing at around 2.2 per cent.

Although employees are being asked to accept a small pay pact this year, their job security is subject to question. Some economists believe the unemployment rate could climb as high as 3.5 per cent this year from the current 2.2 per cent.

Economists say the low wage increase could prolong Japan's

downturn because weak consumer spending is one of the major reasons the economy remains in the doldrums.

Many consumers, haunted by fears about the future, are increasing savings and reducing spending, leading to a self-fulfilling prophecy of economic weakness.

Economists estimate that Japanese are saving about 16 per cent of disposable income compared with around 14 per cent in 1989, the peak economic boom time.

The OECD recently said that Japan's economic slowdown, now nearly two years old, may have stopped as the government maintains, but recovery will be long and slow.

The Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) predicted in its year-end economic outlook that Japan's gross domestic product (GDP) would grow 2.3 per cent in 1993, rising to only three per cent in 1994.

Moscow increases petrol prices sharply

MOSCOW (Agencies) — Moscow has increased petrol prices by about 30 per cent bringing the cost of a litre of top grade fuel to just under 10 cents, ITAR-TASS news agency said.

TASS said Moscow authorities were passing on higher prices imposed by oil producers. Top grade fuel would cost 48 rubles a litre and diesel fuel would cost 30 rubles (six cents).

The cost of Russian energy has risen sharply in the last 12 months after the country freed prices for most other goods, but fuel remains subsidised at levels well below world prices.

New Russian economic chief Boris Fyodorov said earlier this week he favoured letting fuel prices rise to world levels.

"My policy is that (energy) prices should be brought closer and closer to world prices and only in this way will we be able to liberalise our economy," Mr. Fyodorov said. But he said it would be difficult to free prices under current circumstances.

Russia's Prime Minister Monday lifted price controls he had imposed Jan. 1 in a step that had been widely viewed as a setback for free market reforms.

Deputy Prime Minister Boris Fyodorov announced the decision, and said Prime Minister Viktor Chernomyrdin agreed to it. Mr. Fyodorov called the original decree "a bureaucratic mistake."

The reversal, however, reflected the deep divide between the new prime minister, a Soviet-era industrialist, and the young reformers in his cabinet. Most had worked under Mr. Chernomyrdin's predecessor, Yegor Gaidar, the architect of Russia's reforms.

Mr. Chernomyrdin issued a new decree saying that prices charged by some government-owned monopolies would be controlled, but that most prices in Russia would be allowed to float freely, Mr. Fyodorov said.

"We passed the (new) decree to prohibit the administrative regulation of prices," Mr. Fyodorov said at a news conference. "The exception is for monopoly enterprises."

The government also plans to work more closely with the Russian central bank to place stricter control on the money supply to curb inflation.

Reimposing the price controls was Mr. Chernomyrdin's first major act as Russia's new prime minister. He had defended the step as a way to bring order to the chaotic economy and protect consumers from spiraling prices.

Clinton opts not to stick to old deficit targets

WASHINGTON (R) — President Bill Clinton opened the door to widening the federal government's budget deficit Thursday by deciding not to stick to fixed targets for the deficit set under a 1990 law.

The White House said Mr. Clinton notified Congress he would not return to the old system of fixed deficit ceilings and the threat of automatic spending cuts to enforce them.

"The president has today notified the congressional leadership of technical adjustments to be made in calculating the national deficit," a White House statement said.

The statement said that sticking to the old deficit target could bring about "across-the-board budget reductions in accounts such as national defence that could equal 11 per cent in the beginning of the next fiscal year."

It would also "undermine the credibility of economic and budget estimates," the statement by White House Communications Director George Stephanopoulos said.

"President Clinton will soon put before the Congress a real economic programme aimed at reducing the deficit and providing long-term economic growth," he pointed out.

The 1990 deficit-reduction law required Mr. Clinton to decide by Thursday whether to stick to the deficit ceilings that were written into the law at that time for the fiscal year 1994, which begins in October, and 1995.

The deficit target for fiscal 1994 was approximately \$308 billion, with a 15 billion margin of leeway on top of that. The deficit in the current fiscal year ending Sept. 30 is projected at about \$327 billion.

This was Mr. Clinton's only

chance, under the law, to decide not to abide by the ceilings, and he opted not to do so. His move does not preclude any deficit reduction he may choose to do on his own.

During his campaign, Mr. Clinton pledged to cut the deficit in half within four years. But since he was elected, Mr. Clinton has backpedalled on this pledge, saying new, higher estimates of the deficit would make it much more difficult to meet.

The U.S. foreign aid programme, rooted in the cold war, beset by bureaucratic inefficiency and arguably the most unpopular U.S. budget item, could face overhaul under the administration of Mr. Clinton.

Both Secretary of State Warren Christopher and key members of the U.S. Congress are talking about reforming foreign aid, which over the years has supported despots and fuelled arms races even as it helped the world's impoverished.

The aid programme, at less than \$15 billion, is a fraction of the United States' annual expenditures, but it is the one most reviled by U.S. voters when there is talk of budget cutting.

Administration officials argue that the programme is not a giveaway but one that serves U.S. security interests and helps American employment.

But too often in the past aid was allocated on the basis of a foreign government's anti-communism efforts while eyes were closed to its human rights and other abuses.

"We have an aid programme that is largely untuned to the cold war period, where most of the analysis was whether or not the

aid would somehow advantage us vis-a-vis the former Soviet Union. And that's no longer a very relevant consideration," Mr. Christopher said last week.

Mr. Christopher told the Senate Foreign Relations Committee that some military programme could be cut now that the cold war had ended but that aid should continue to serve humanitarian purposes and "enlightened self-interest."

The basic U.S. foreign aid law has remained largely intact since 1961. A congressional attempt to rewrite it failed two years ago but since then the end of the cold war has removed much of the rationale behind it.

This rationale included giving aid to despots merely because they were anti-communist, said Senator Patrick Leahy, a Democrat from Vermont who heads the Senate subcommittee that allocates foreign aid funds.

"It's a crazy way of doing things," he said, noting that the cold war focus meant that for over 10 years the United States poured more money into tiny El Salvador to save it from leftist takeover than anything projected for the former Soviet Union.

Mr. Leahy's subcommittee plans hearings as early as February to begin reexamining the aid programme. His aim: "Just get rid of it and start over again." The alternative: Increasing pressure to scrap the programme entirely.

The reforms are sure to run into trouble from lobbying groups that have done much to direct foreign aid funds. Indeed, aid programmes are sprinkled with evidence of the power of special interests and ethnic groups.

Britain still on the ropes as consumers refuse to spend

LONDON (R) — British retail sales suffered an unexpected 0.7 per cent fall in December, dealing a blow to hopes of a quick rebound in consumer spending and the economy.

The gloomy figures from the Central Statistical Office disappointed economists who had expected sales to rise and suggested the long-awaited recovery was far from guaranteed.

But the government put a brave face on the figures, insisting that the trend in sales was still upwards.

"We were hoping for a somewhat better figure but you have to look at the underlying trend and that is still upwards," said Stephen Dorrell, financial secretary to the treasury.

The new data prompted fears of a harsh spring in which recent sparks of life in the recession-

battered economy could be extinguished by consumers' unwillingness to spend. The fall in December sales followed unchanged sales in November.

"Whatever recovery there might have been in consumer confidence has not led to a rise in actual sales. Worries about unemployment are still a big drag on demand," said Jeremy Hawkins, senior economic adviser at Bank of America in London.

Economists said the honeymoon period that Chancellor of the Exchequer Norman Lamont has enjoyed since the pound left the European Community's exchange rate mechanism (ERM) currency grid in mid-September might have ended.

Since the pound left the ERM interest rates have been cut in four stages to seven per cent to

help end Britain's longest recession since the 1930s, but the economy remains fragile.

Chancellor Lamont has so far held fire on further interest rate cuts, but his hand may be forced if the recovery fails to take root, economists said.

Mr. Lamont's freedom to cut rates depends heavily on the strength of the pound and underlying inflation, which crept up to a year-on-year rate of 3.7 per cent in December, uncomfortably close to the top of the government's one to four per cent target range.

The sales figures followed a consumer confidence survey from research group Gallup and Business Strategies Ltd. published which showed consumer confidence fell to its lowest in two years in the final quarter of 1992.

S. Africa faces tough challenges

JOHANNESBURG (R) — South Africa can expect a modest revival in its economy in 1993 after three successive years of shrinkage, an International Monetary Fund (IMF) report has said.

But it warned that broad-based political consensus was needed soon on a medium-term economic programme to achieve sustainable recovery.

"Increased uncertainty over South Africa's political future has manifested itself in a marked worsening of both consumer and investor confidence," the report said.

The report, released by the finance ministry, was compiled by IMF staff after a visit for annual consultations at the end of August.

It listed significant challenges and a need for reforms balancing policies that address acute social problems and those that promote growth.

"Without serious social progress, the conditions for economic growth are unlikely to prevail," it said, but it added:

"The pursuit of policies of so-

cial betterment to the detriment of economic growth will not allow the resources to be generated that might underpin sustainable social advancement."

It predicted the economy, supported by recession, drought, uncertainty and depressed prices in world markets for gold and other exports, would shrink two per cent in 1992.

It would expand by 1.5 per cent in 1993. But, with the population growing an estimated 2.5 per cent a year, minimal average annual

growth of 3.25 per cent was needed over the medium term.

Major investment would be needed to achieve this. The rate of gross domestic investment would have to rise from 17 per cent of gross domestic product (GDP) to around 27 per cent or an average 23 per cent in coming years.

The report expressed concern over the government's runaway budget deficit, which is expected to widen to seven per cent of GDP in the 1992/93 fiscal year.

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Russian soldier killed in Bosnia; Mostar under heavy shelling

SARAJEVO (AP) — A Russian peacekeeper was killed when he stepped on a landmine in Croatia and Serb gunners bombarded the western Bosnian town of Mostar after 40 days of calm, reports said Friday.

A U.N. spokesman in the Croatian capital Zagreb, Sergio Apollonio, said 20-year-old Sgt. Alexander Butorin, was killed in eastern Croatia Wednesday.

Another Russian soldier on patrol with him was wounded by shrapnel and hospitalised near the eastern Croatian city of Osijek, Mr. Apollonio said. It is unclear why news of the incident was first released Friday.

Russia contributed a 900-man infantry battalion to the U.N. force in June and agreed in July to send 400 more soldiers.

The move has been controversial and the soldier's death could further inflame Russian nationalists opposed to Russia's participation in the peacekeeping force. The nationalists regard Serbs as "brother Slavs" who should be defended, not censured.

Sgt. Butorin was the 24th U.N. soldier killed in former Yugoslavia since peacekeepers were deployed last year. More than 300 have been wounded.

Croatian officials in Mostar reported that the town, in western Bosnia-Herzegovina, came under heavy artillery fire from nearby Serb forces Friday after weeks of calm. There was no immediate reports of casualties.

Vesko Vego, a spokesman for the Croatian Defense Council in Mostar, also reported sporadic shooting between Croats and Muslims in the central Bosnian town of Gornji Vakuf despite a ceasefire agreed upon Wednesday.

On Thursday, Bosnian TV charged that Serb warplanes

attacked the eastern, government-held town of Srebrenica.

Earlier this week, a Bosnian Serb Assembly accepted constitutional principles of a peace plan worked out by U.N. and European Community mediators.

Muslims and Croats have tentatively accepted the plan, but not without reservations. U.N. spokesman Fred Eckhard said the peace talks, which resume Saturday in Geneva, will focus on the proposed boundaries for 10 autonomous provinces.

Despite warnings from the international community that Serb acceptance must be unconditional, the Bosnian Serb parliament insisted on their right to self-determination, a demand flatly rejected in the talks.

The right to self-determination in the future, Bosnian Serbs could opt to join neighbouring Serb-dominated Yugoslavia.

Bosnian Foreign Minister Haris Silajdzic told Bosnian television he was not optimistic about the Geneva peace talks, saying he thought the Serbs would not abide by any agreement.

"Any kind of drawing of maps is the aggressors' achievement. So without any doubt we can see that the aggressor, through the shedding of blood, has achieved his goal," he said.

In Washington, the incoming administration echoed Mr. Silajdzic's pessimism, noting the ferocity of the fighting and the fact that previous commitments have been broken.

Richard Boucher, spokesman for Secretary of State Warren Christopher, said his new boss supports the negotiating process, but "expressed doubts about whether (peace) can realistically be achieved."

Fighting in Bosnia broke out in March after Muslims and Croats declared independence from Serb-dominated Yugoslavia. About 18,000 people have been killed, and probably many more, since Serbs rebelled against Muslims and Croats who voted to seek independence from Yugoslavia.

Seventy per cent of the republic has been seized by Serbs, who made up one-third of Bosnia's prewar population. Croats occupy most of the remaining territory.

Under the proposed peace plan, Serbs would control about 40 per cent of the republic.

Sarajevo Radio reported a fierce morning shelling of the old centre of the Bosnian capital, where the republic's Muslim-led government has been under a Serb siege for nine months.

Sniper fire intensified in other parts of the capital, it said, while Serb-Muslim, Serb-Croat and Muslim-Croat clashes have continued elsewhere in Bosnia's tripartite civil war.

The Belgrade-based Tanjug News Agency said Croatian Armed Forces had launched attacks against the rebel Serb state of Krajina in Croatia.

The latest flare-ups further clouded prospects for any quick breakthroughs in Geneva, where the three warring groups are due to resume negotiations Saturday with international mediators Cyrus Vance and Lord Owen.

Serbia's headline nationalist leader, President Slobodan Milosevic, Montenegro President Momir Bulatovic, and Dobrica Cosic, the president of rump Yugoslavia, all planned to join the negotiations along with Bosnia's ethnic leaders.

"We are now at the turning point — either towards peace or

towards total war," Mr. Cosic said.

The Serb News Agency (SRNA) said Croatian forces from the Orasje area rained 120mm mortars on the north Bosnian land corridor linking Serbia with Serb-held territories in Croatia.

Serb military sources also said their positions in the nearby town of Brocko came under machinegun fire and that occasional artillery and infantry duels broke out overnight throughout the area.

Serb defenders of the east Bosnian village of Skelani, where fierce battles with Muslims raged over the past two weeks, consolidated their lines and Friday morning was quiet there without even sporadic small arms fire, Tanjug said.

NATO's commander in Europe said Thursday military pressure could be used in former Yugoslavia only in support of a political solution, not to force an end to the conflict.

"We will use military forces to strengthen the political process as opposed to trying to find a military solution," U.S. General John Shalikashvili told Reuters in an interview at Supreme Headquarters Allied Powers Europe.

"There is a strong commitment...to make the political process work," he said.

Measures to tighten U.N. economic sanctions against Serbia and its tiny ally Montenegro or using warplanes to enforce the "no-fly" zone over Bosnia were examples, he said.

Asked whether more could be done to try to force an end to the fighting, such as attacking Serb artillery that is shelling Sarajevo, Gen. Shalikashvili said: "These sorts of things are extraordinarily difficult."



The freighter Dolphin I, registered in the tiny Caribbean nation of Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, is docked in the harbour of Taranto after it was stopped as it approached the Strait of Otranto between Italy and Albania. The freighter was

intercepted by an allied warship while trying to break a U.N. embargo against the former Yugoslavia and was transporting weapons, NATO southern command stated (AFP photo)

CIS debates future, nuclear arms

MINSK, Belarus (R) — Commonwealth leaders met Friday in an effort to head off disintegration of the ailing post-Soviet community and resolve a festering dispute over control of nuclear arms.

On a cold drizzly morning in the Belarusian capital, Minsk, prime minister and presidents arrived in black limousines at the former Communist Party headquarters which now serves as nerve-centre for the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS).

Flags of the 10 member-states hung over the entrance-way of the four-storey brown concrete building as Russian President Boris Yeltsin, Ukrainian President Leonid Kravchuk and other leaders arrived.

The summit had been postponed three times while member states wrangled over key issues and sought ways of keeping powerful Ukraine within their ranks.

Ukraine, with 176 strategic missiles on its soil, has vowed to rid itself of the weapons, but is resisting Russian demands that it surrender all control over the weapons to Russia.

Asked what he expected of the meeting, Russian President Boris Yeltsin told reporters: "The strengthening of the Commonwealth and its processes of integration which I believe will move ahead quite energetically in 1993."

"Today is the start of deeper integration," Mr. Yeltsin, speaking earlier as he left Moscow, said the Com-

monwealth must agree on a blueprint that all member nations can sign. Ukraine has already said it will not sign an existing draft statute, arguing it would have to cede too much sovereignty.

"We can't allow a (situation where a) Central Asian Bloc by Kazakhstan goes off on its own," he said.

Russian Deputy Prime Minister Alexander Shokhin said Russia would approve the draft CIS charter on integration — vital if the grouping is not to fade into irrelevance — but added it was not expected the document would be signed Friday.

A core of Central Asian republics along with Russia has made it clear it will sign a charter. But if Ukraine and others — possibly including Moldova — refuse, this could lead to formation of a two-tier community with some states assuming a form of associate membership.

The presidents and prime ministers were tackling a combined agenda of 24 points including the charter and proposed creation of an inter-state bank to clear transactions between member states. The breakdown of any reliable mechanism to transfer money between CIS countries is a major obstacle to trade.

Belarusian leader Stanislav Shushkevich said he was ready to sign the controversial draft charter on integration but, highlighting divisions that dog the CIS, insisted his republic would not endorse any of its provisions on collective security.

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Australia: Khmer Rouge too weak to block polls

PHNOM PENH (R) — Two key players in the Cambodian peace process said Friday that U.N.-organised general elections would go ahead even without the Khmer Rouge guerrilla faction, which refuses to take part.

Australian Foreign Minister Gareth Evans said this could mean a new government being formed while up to 20 per cent of the country remained under Khmer Rouge control.

But he said the guerrillas were not strong enough to seriously disrupt the elections in May, the climax to the U.N.'s largest peacekeeping operation.

Evans and his Indonesian counterpart Ali Alatas, co-chairmen of a 1991 Paris conference at which the peace agreement was signed, arrived in Phnom Penh Friday for talks with U.N. officials and Cambodian leaders.

Khmer Rouge Leader Khieu Samphan told Mr. Alatas in Bangkok Thursday that it was impossible for his party to take part in the elections under current conditions.

The U.N. Security Council has set a Jan. 31 deadline for completion of voter registration but the Khmer Rouge has resisted attempts to register people living in zones it controls.

After talks with Lieutenant-General John Sanderson, military commander of the 22,000-strong U.N. Transitional Authority in Cambodia, Mr. Evans said he was convinced the Khmer Rouge would not threaten the holding of elections.

"His very clearly and persuasively expressed view to me was they don't, there is simply not the capability to mount a substantial disruption of the election campaign let alone re-engage in a full scale civil war," Mr. Evans said.

"I discussed with him very fully the basis for that assessment and I think it is a plausible and persuasive case."

Haiti army discord persists after mutiny

PORT-AU-PRINCE, Haiti (AP) — Discontent simmered among the rank-and-file of Haiti's military a day after an attempted mutiny at a base outside the capital, diplomats said Thursday.

An army statement late Wednesday declared the brief mid-day revolt was over and said one soldier was arrested and four others fled. It called the disturbances "politically motivated."

The disturbances were the first report of open insubordination since the army sent President Jean-Bertrand Aristide into exile in September. One diplomat living in Haiti said the brief mutiny reflected continuing unrest among troops and some officers

up to the rank of colonel.

He said soldiers and police are concerned that army chief Gen. Raoul Cedras will make concessions in negotiations to allow the return of Mr. Aristide, the nation's first democratically elected leader.

The diplomat and a prominent businessman close to Prime Minister Marc Bazin also backed reports that soldiers had arrested an army major several days ago who had ordered them to give up their weapons. They spoke on condition of anonymity.

A Western diplomat, also demanding anonymity, minimised the importance of Wednesday's disturbance.

The first salvage tug reached the burning ship early Friday and more were due later, but it was expected to take days to bring the blaze under control, said a spokesman for the A.P. Moller Co. of Copenhagen, the owner of the Maersk Navigator.

There were fears earlier that the spill threatened environmental disaster for the coasts of Indonesia, Thailand and Malaysia.

The ship was near the northern entrance to one of the world's busiest waterways, the Malacca Straits between Malaysia and the Indonesian island of Sumatra.

The Singapore-registered Maersk Navigator collided early Thursday with the Sanko Honour, another Singapore-registered tanker, which was empty.

Both ships burst into flames, but no injuries were reported.

The 24 crew members on the 4-year-old Maersk Navigator abandoned ship and were rescued from a lifeboat by the passing German container ship DRS

Baird withdraws nomination for U.S. attorney general

WASHINGTON (R) — Zoe Baird withdrew Friday as President Bill Clinton's nominee for attorney general, bowing to mounting political pressure over the hiring of illegal aliens to work in her home.

Ms. Baird, 40, a corporate lawyer and former White House aide, said in a letter to Mr. Clinton: "I am surprised at the extent of the public reaction, but face the reality that this situation affects my ability to achieve the goals we both have for the Department of Justice."

Mr. Clinton issued a statement calling her "a gifted attorney, and a woman of decency and integrity" and said he hoped she would be available for other assignments.

Ms. Baird, who would have been the first woman to hold the post, said she had been "forthright about the circumstances surrounding my child care situation from the beginning."

Mr. Clinton, who accepted Ms. Baird's request to withdraw "with sadness," took the blame for failing to fully weigh the impact of what he referred to as "the child care matter."

"Clearly, our review process prior to her selection failed to evaluate this issue completely," Mr. Clinton said. "For that, I take full responsibility."

The White House said there was no word on the next Clinton nominee. Ms. Baird was one of a

number of prominent women lawyers and judges who were considered after the November election.

Support for Ms. Baird began to crumble Thursday under the weight of public opinion polls showing strong disapproval of her and a flood of messages to members of the Senate Judiciary Committee considering her nomination.

An ABC News/Washington Post poll of 515 Americans released late Thursday showed nearly six out of 10 felt she should not be nominated and eight out of 10 thought the hiring of the illegal immigrants was wrong. A CNN/Gallup poll found similar views.

Two Democrats, Bennett Johnston of Louisiana and Richard Shelby of Alabama, urged Ms. Baird to step down and other Democrats were on the verge of following suit.

Five Republicans have also said they would oppose Ms. Baird, putting her confirmation in jeopardy despite President Clinton's support. Democrats have a 57-43 Senate majority.

The Senate has confirmed all of Mr. Clinton's other cabinet nominations.

Ms. Baird, on the second day of her Senate Judiciary Committee confirmation hearing Thursday, refused to quit, saying: "I don't believe that would be appropriate."

Salvage tug battles supertanker blaze off Indonesia

SINGAPORE (AP) — A salvage tug battled the flames on an oil supertanker that had collided with another tanker off northern Indonesia, the ship's owners said Friday.

At least one of the cargo tanks on the 260,000-tonne Maersk Navigator, which was carrying nearly two million barrels of oil, was ruptured, spilling crude into the sea as it drifted in a north-westerly direction.

The first salvage tug reached the burning ship early Friday and more were due later, but it was expected to take days to bring the blaze under control, said a spokesman for the A.P. Moller Co. of Copenhagen, the owner of the Maersk Navigator.

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Both ships burst into flames, but no injuries were reported.

The 24 crew members on the 4-year-old Maersk Navigator abandoned ship and were rescued from a lifeboat by the passing German container ship DRS

Atlantic, Moller officials said. The Maersk Navigator was carrying 1.865 million barrels (about 78 million gallons; 297 million litres) of crude oil to Japan from Oman, a spokesman for General Sekiyu that owns part of the oil said in Tokyo.

"Some oil has spilled into the sea and is on fire," Moller said in a statement issued in Singapore.

Moller said there was no indication of the size of the spill, and the extent of damage to the hull had not been determined.

Earlier this month, a hurricane destroyed a tanker off the Shetland Islands in Scotland, releasing 24.6 million gallons (93.5 litres) of oil into the Bay of Quendale. The spill, one of the world's largest, was more than twice the size of the disastrous Exxon Valdez spill in Alaska in March 1989.

There was no immediate word on what caused Thursday's collision. It occurred in the Andaman Sea about 90 kilometres from Banda Aceh on the northern tip of the Indonesian island of Sumatra.

The fire on board the 47,344-tonne Sanko Honour was put out by its crew of 25, who remained on board, a spokesman for Sanko Steamship Co. said in Tokyo.

Sanko managed both the crew and vessel, which was chartered by Shell International Petroleum Co.

Since both ships are registered in Singapore, the Marine Department ordered the crews brought

here for interrogation. Of the 24 aboard Navigator, 16 were Singaporean.

The Dutch firm Smit Tak Towage and Salvage is coordinating salvage operations under Indonesian supervision, since the collision took place in Indonesian waters.

In London, shipping experts blamed poor enforcement of safety regulations for a series of disasters that left a supertanker ablaze and gushing oil north of Indonesia Friday, and fouled waters off Spain, Scotland and Estonia.

They acknowledged that bad weather, mechanical problems and human error figured in the disasters but insisted each horror story might have been prevented had international tanker traffic guidelines been followed.

"If the regulations are on the books but they are not enforced, they are meaningless," said Richard Golob, president of World Information Systems in Cambridge, Mass., which monitors oil spills.

Mr. Golob said U.S. laws approved in 1990 after the Exxon Valdez ran aground in Alaska's Prince William Sound, spilling 11 million gallons (42 million litres), already have reduced oil spills in U.S. coastal waters.

Tankers entering Prince William Sound and Washington state's Puget Sound now must be escorted by tugs. An escort is credited with preventing another tanker from running aground in

Alaska in October, Mr. Golob said.

Escorts are not required in other busy international straits, including the Hole, south of the Shetland Islands where the oil tanker Braer's engines failed in severe weather this month.

Mr. Golob said that enforcement regulations could have prevented disaster — even if human error or bad weather were to blame.

"You can't legislate against mistakes, but you can make sure crews are properly trained," he said.

Faith Yando, editor of the Oil Spill Intelligence Report of Arlington, Mass., agreed: "The regulations the International Maritime Organisation have already passed would do a lot towards preventing spills."

"The problem is one of enforcement — it is a matter of carrots and sticks," and the... (Maritime Organisation's) sticks are limited."

The organisation, a U.N. body that oversees maritime safety and prevention of pollution from ships, is concerned because its rules are not enforced by some signatory countries, spokesman Roger Kohn said.

Mr. Kohn said some ship owners take advantage of laxity to gain flags for ships that are not seaworthy.

Poorer countries often do not have the resources or training to perform safety checks on ships, he said. At a meeting in April,

the International Maritime Organisation will consider how to help them.

"We're looking at how to pressure or assist countries into enforcing regulations," Mr. Kohn said.

But he added that ultimately it is the ship owner who is responsible for the seaworthiness of his vessel.

Nina Sankovitch, a tanker safety expert with the Natural Resources Defence Council, with headquarters in New York, concurred.

She said that in the absence of strict enforcement, "there's the reaction on the part of tanker owners that no one is watching them to be sure they are playing by the rules."

"Ship owners are cutting maintenance and cutting crews, and are trying to save time on voyages by going through bad weather and environmentally sensitive areas."

Environmentalists renewed pleas for faster introduction of double-hulled tankers, barring tankers from environmentally sensitive areas, and broadening requirements that escort tugs accompany ships through difficult passages.

All tankers entering U.S. waters must have double hulls by 2015. The International Maritime Organisation adopted a similar but milder rule. Fewer than 10 per cent of the world's 3,200 tankers have double hulls, Ms. Sankovitch said.

Swiss winter resorts worry at lack of snow

ZURICH (R) — Swiss ski resorts are desperately waiting for snow. Unusual weather since before Christmas has brought warm temperatures but no heavy snowfalls to the Alps, playing havoc with the country's sports programme. A spokesman for the Swiss Ski Federation said Wednesday that it had already been forced to cancel, postpone or relocate over half of its winter programme of international downhill, slalom and cross-country races. The exclusive eastern winter resort at St. Moritz is using snow cannons to cover the frozen lake with the required 10 cm (four inches) of snow for winter polo and horse racing championships planned for the next few weeks. "If there is no snow in the next 10 days then it will get critical," Hans-Rudolf Baumann, spokesman for the Swiss Federation of Cable Car Companies, said.

The stuff that presidents are made of

WASHINGTON (R) — So, you want your kid to grow up to be president? Here with a formula for past success of the 40 presidents: Move to Virginia (eight presidents) and have a Scorpio or Aquarius baby (five presidents under each sign). Barring that, try Ohio (seven presidents). Be an Episcopalian (12 of English origin (18) or at the very least some combination of English, Irish, Scottish and Welsh (17). Choose your first or second child (24) for the job, and if it's a boy, have him marry a woman from New York (nine), or at least Ohio or Virginia (six each), and hope that he's tall. Then get him to have 3.75 children. Whatever you do, don't have the baby in a hospital. Only one president, Jimmy Carter, was born in one. Send him (or her) to law school, make sure he or she passes the bar (25) and suggest a move to New York before the election. It wouldn't hurt however to first be a member of Congress (24) or a governor (15), and military service (26) is probably a good idea, although Bill Clinton has perhaps put that caveat to rest for a while. Being vice president isn't a bad line on the resume (14), either. It doesn't matter if your father wasn't a statesman — only five presidents' fathers were, but note that 16 were businessmen. The most common profession of fathers of presidents? Planters or farmers produced 21, or over half, of the nation's 40 presidents.

Apology stops flap over French-Canadian tourists

MIAMI (R) — French-Canadian tourists got an apology from a Florida publication that had poked fun at them as ugly, fat and cheap, and they called off their planned demonstrations. The war of words, which has made headlines in Canada and prompted Canadian officials to fly down here, began after XS, a local entertainment tabloid newspaper, referred to the French-Canadians as "kissing cousins of the great white whale." It ended with an apology and a pledge that it won't happen again, spokesmen for the French-Canadian Community said. "I'm satisfied," Vincent Della Noce, a member of Canada's parliament who flew to Hollywood, Florida, this week to denounce XS. The French-Canadian group here had held press conferences and planned to protest outside the Fort Lauderdale Sun-Sentinel, which is part of the same company as XS. They called off the protests after an apology from Mitch Golub, development director for the Sun-Sentinel Co., said Barry Sacharow, marketing director at Le Soleil De La Floride, a local French language publication which has been at the centre of the controversy. Mr. Sacharow said he was assured that XS would not "single out" French-Canadians for ridicule next year.

Rare tiger kills poacher in Russia

MOSCOW (R) — A rare Amur tiger in the Russian Far East killed a poacher who was after the animal's valuable pelt, TASS News Agency said. Police said the poacher's mutilated body was found near the village of Rudnaya Pristan. It gave no further details. A local official told TASS that the tigers usually hunt to avoid people but said hunters were keen to get hold of the pelt which could be sold abroad for up to \$10,000.